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John Lehmann

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Foreword

The recent series of prosecutions of serious authors and their publishers for obscene libel spotlights again the risks that a genuine artist runs today in the Anglo-Saxon countries, and will continue to run until the law agrees to differentiate between the *tendency* to corrupt and the *intent* to corrupt—and finds a way of doing so. The enormous expense of litigation makes even an acquittal a dubious triumph for an author, and will scarcely encourage his publisher to be adventurous in the future.

It is a curious anomaly that, while politicians and publicists of every kind exhort the British to be more inventive and progressive, the grip of repression seems to tighten over the play of truth in literature. We are forever being reminded that only by keeping ahead of everyone else in scientific discovery, technological ingenuity, and by scrapping outmoded ideas and practices in social and economic affairs and every other department of our lives, can we survive at all as a nation of weight and influence; and yet, in our law, we refuse to allow to our poets and novelists the same freedom to experiment and modernize that we demand of our scientists and technocrats. We banned *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and Joyce's *Ulysses*; we made ourselves the laughing-stock of other nations by doing so; but we do not seem prepared to behave very differently today.

Some may question whether there is any real connection or parallel between freedom of experiment in designing an aeroplane and frankness of speech in writing a novel. Mr Justice Stable, in his classic summing-up, pointed out that if books that openly described the way life was lived in other countries could not be published here, we should be unable to have a complete understanding of other peoples, and might well suffer for it in practical affairs. Surely a knowledge of the truth, a serious portrayal of the way men act and think, is just as important for an understanding of our fellow-countrymen. The last generation has seen a slow pushing forward of the frontiers of frankness in discussing the problems of sex and love: it is impossible to believe we are not the healthier for it. It is equally impossible not to think that a successful attempt to push that frontier back would be a disaster.

The creative artist is, almost by definition, one who refuses to conform to conventional thinking, whose aim it is to break up accepted

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FOREWORD

notions and substitute something that he believes to contain more of truth and beauty. Woe to him at the moment if his new thinking involves the exposure of what Mrs Grundy would prefer to remain decently veiled. He must add the risk of prosecution in the Courts once more to the other risks that beset him: the small risk of being derided by the philistines, the greater risk of being totally ignored, the supreme risk of being reduced to poverty and despair.

In discussing this last risk in the Foreword to the October number, I said that it was generally agreed that official and semi-official agencies would have now to a large extent to take the place of the extinct private patron. One of these official agencies, the Arts Council, has just published its report for 1953-1954 under the title of *Public Responsibility for the Arts*. It makes absorbing reading, and whoever inspired it is to be congratulated in avoiding a dry-as-dust catalogue of facts and figures. The report is full of hard, intelligent thinking about the way the Arts Council should achieve the ends for which it was designed. It has stimulating suggestions to make about the decentralization of official art patronage and the encouragement of civic Arts Trusts in provincial centres; it shows its awareness of the basic, the most controversial and difficult of all problems in subsidy by public money, the fostering of what *The Manchester Guardian* called 'growing points of the arts' — and also its courage in tackling it. And it shows the flexibility and imaginativeness of its approach when, for instance, it describes how it has given bus-subsidies in some small provincial centres to enable people from surrounding districts to attend the repertory theatres.

But what of the Arts Council's attitude towards literature? The report shows that less than one third of one per cent of its income is devoted to the support of poetry — and nothing to the support of any other forms of literature (except, of course, play-writing). This suggests either a gross neglect of literature or a remarkable capacity of literature to look after itself. Anyone who reads the report carefully will realize that the former cannot be true. If imaginative literature needed help on the scale that opera and drama need it, it would certainly get a bigger slice of the cake. Many interesting conclusions could be drawn from this, which I do not propose to discuss now; but it is worth pointing out that this *comparatively* self-supporting buoyancy of literature has meant that the Arts Council has never yet been involved in the problem of obscene libel. Some of us may wish that it had, or will be soon; for the final exposure of the absurdity of the present state of the law might dramatically result from it.

6 3 ★

JOHN LEHMANN

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VERNON SCANNELL

Gunpowder Plot



For days these curious cardboard buds have lain
In brightly coloured boxes. Soon the night
Will come. We pray there'll be no rain
To make these magic orchids flame less bright.

Now in the garden's darkness they begin
To flower: the frenzied whizz of Catherine-wheel
Puts forth its fiery petals and the thin
Rocket soars to burst upon the steel

Bulwark of a cloud. And then the guy,
Absurdly human phoenix, is again
Gulped by greedy flames: the harvest sky
Is flecked with threshed and golden grain.

'Uncle! A cannon! Watch me as I light it!
The women helter-skelter, squealing high,
Retreat; the paper fuse is quickly lit,
A cat-like hiss, and spit of fire, a sly

Falter, then the air is shocked with blast.
The cannon bangs and in my nostrils drifts
A bitter scent that brings the lurking past
Lurching to my side. The present shifts,

Allows a ten-year memory to walk
Unhindered now; and so I'm forced to hear
The banshee howl of mortar and the talk
Of men who died; am forced to taste my fear.

VERNON SCANNELL

I listen for a moment to the guns,
The torn earth's grunts, recalling how I prayed.
The past retreats. I hear a corpse's sons—
'Who's scared of bangers!' 'Uncle, John's afraid!'



Philippe Jullian: After the Garden Party

GRAHAM GREENE

A Few Pipes

Extract from an Indo-China Journal



December 31, 1953. Saigon.

One of the attractions of far places is 'the friends of friends': some quality has attracted somebody you know, will it also attract yourself? This evening such a one came to see me, a naval doctor. After a whiskey in my room, I drove round Saigon with him, on the back of his motor-cycle, to a couple of *fumeries*. The first was a cheap one, on the first floor over a tiny school where pupils were prepared for '*le diplôme et le brevet*'. The proprietor was smoking himself: a *malade imaginaire* dehydrated by his sixty pipes a day. A young girl asleep, and a young boy. Opium should not be for the young, but as with the Chinese for the middle-aged and for the old. Pipes here cost 10 piastres each (say 2s.). Then we went on to a more elegant establishment—*Chez Pola*. Here one reserves the room and can bring a companion. A great Chinese umbrella over the big couch. A bookshelf full of books beside the couch—it was odd to find two of my own novels in a *fumerie*: *La Ministère de la Peur*, and *Rocher de Brighton*. Here the pipes cost 30 piastres.

My experience of opium began in October 1951 when I was in Haiphong on the way to the Baie d'Along. A French official took me after dinner to a small apartment in a back street—I could smell the opium as I came up the stairs. It was like the first sight of a beautiful woman with whom one realizes a relationship is possible: somebody whose memory will not be dimmed by a night's sleep.

The madame decided that as I was a *débutant* I must have only four pipes, and so I am grateful to her that my first experience was delightful and not spoiled by the nausea of over-smoking. The *ambiance* won my heart at once—the hard couch, the leather pillow like a brick—these stand for a certain austerity, the athleticism of pleasure, while the small lamp glowing on the face of the pipe-maker, as he kneads his little ball of brown gum over the flame, until

it bubbles and alters shape like a dream, the dimmed lights, the chaste cups of unsweetened tea, these stand for the '*luxe et volupté*'.

Each pipe from the moment the needle plunges the little ball home and the bowl is reversed over the flame lasts no more than a quarter of a minute—the practised inhaler can draw a whole pipeful into his lungs in one long inhalation. After two pipes I felt a certain drowsiness, after four my mind felt alert and calm—unhappiness and fear of the future became like something remembered one had thought important once. I, who feel shy at exhibiting the grossness of my French, found myself reciting a poem of Baudelaire's to my companion. When I got home that night I experienced for the first time the white night of opium. One lies relaxed and wakeful, not desiring sleep. We dread wakefulness when our thoughts are disturbed, but in this state one is calm—it would be wrong even to say that one is happy—happiness disturbs the pulse. And then suddenly without warning one sleeps. Never has one slept so deeply a whole night-long sleep, and then the waking and the luminous dial of the clock showing that twenty minutes of so-called real time have gone by. Again the calm lying awake, again the deep brief all-night sleep. Once in Saigon after smoking I went to bed at 1.30 and had to rise again at 4.0 to catch a bomber to Hanoi, but in those less-than-three hours, I slept all tiredness away.

It was not that night, but many nights later, I had a curiously vivid dream. One does not dream after smoking as a rule, though sometimes one wakes with panic terrors; one dreams during disintoxication, when the mind and the body are at war. I dreamt that in some intellectual discussion I made the remark, 'It would have been interesting if at the birth of Our Lord there had been present someone who saw nothing at all', and then, in the way that dreams have, I was that man. The shepherds were kneeling in prayer, the Wise Men were offering their gifts (I can still see in memory the shoulder and red brown robe of one of them—the Ethiopian), but they were praying to, offering to, nothing—a blankness. I was puzzled and disturbed. I thought, 'If they are offering to nothing, they know what they are about, I will offer to nothing too', and putting my hand in my pocket I found a gold piece with which I had intended to buy myself a woman in Bethlehem. Years later I was reading one of the gospels and recognized the scene at which I had been an onlooker. 'So they were offering their gifts to the mother of God', I thought. 'Well, I brought that gold piece to Bethlehem to give to a woman, and it seems I gave it to a woman after all.'

January 10, 1954. Hanoi.

With French friends to the Chinese quarter of Hanoi. We called first for our Chinese friend living over his warehouse of dried medicines from Hong Kong—bales and bales and bales of brittle quackery. The family were all gathered in one upper room with the dog and the cat—husband and wife, daughters, grandparents, cousins. After a cup of tea we paid a visit to a relative—variously known as Serpent Head and The happiest Man in the World. All these Chinese houses have little frontage, but run back a long way from the street. The Happiest Man in the World sat there between the narrow walls like a tunnel, in thin pyjamas—he never troubled to dress. He was rich and he had inherited the business from his father before it was necessary for him to work and when his sons were already old enough to do the work for him. He was like a piece of dried medicine himself, skeletonized by opium. In the background the mah jongg players built their walls, demolished, reshuffled. They didn't even have to look at the pieces they drew, they could tell the design by a touch of the finger. The game made the noise of a stormy tide turning the shingle on a beach. I smoked two pipes as an aperitif, and after dinner at the New Pagoda returned and smoked five more.

January 11, 1954. Hanoi.

Dinner with French friends and afterwards smoked six pipes. Gun-fire and the heavy sound of helicopters low over the roofs bringing the wounded from—somewhere. The nearer you are to war, the less you know what is happening. The daily paper in Hanoi prints less than the daily paper in Saigon, and that prints less than the papers in Paris. The noise of the helicopters had an odd effect on the opium smoking. It drowned the soft bubble of the wax over the flame, and because the pipe was silent, the opium seemed to lose a great deal of its perfume, in the way that a cigarette loses taste in the open air.

January 12, 1954. Vientiane.

Up early to catch a military plane to Vientiane, the administrative capital of Laos. The plane was a freighter with no seats. I sat on a packing case and was glad to arrive.

After lunch I made a rapid tour of Vientiane. Apart from one pagoda and the long sands of the Mekong river, it is an uninteresting town consisting only of two real streets, one European restaurant, a club, the usual grubby market where apart from food there is only the débris of civilization—withered tubes of tooth paste, shop-soiled soaps, pots and pans from the Bon Marché. Fishes were small

and expensive and covered with flies. There were little packets of dyed sweets and sickly cakes made out of rice coloured mauve and pink. The fortune maker of Vientiane was a man with a small site let out as a bicycle park—hundreds of bicycles at 2 piastres a time (say 20 centimes). When he had paid for his concession he was likely to make 600 piastres a day profit (say 6,000 francs). But in Eastern countries there are always wheels within wheels, and it was probable that the concessionaire was only the ghost for one of the princes.

Sometimes one wonders why one bothers to travel, to come 8,000 miles to find only Vientiane at the end of the road, and yet there is a curious satisfaction later, when one reads in England the communiqués and the familiar names start from the page—Nam Dinh, Vientiane, Luang Prabang, looking so important temporarily on a newspaper page as though part of history, to remember them in terms of mauve rice cakes, the rat crossing the restaurant floor as it did tonight until it was chased away behind the bar. Places in history, one learns, are not so important.

After dinner to the house of Mr X, a Eurasian and a habitual smoker. Thinned by his pipes, with bony wrists and ankles and the arms of a small boy, Mr X was a charming and melancholy companion. He spoke beautifully clear French, peering down at his needle through steel-rimmed spectacles. His house was a hovel too small for him to find room for his wife and child who were left in Pnomh Penh. There was nothing to do in the evening—the cinema showed only the oldest films, and there was really nothing to do all day either, but wait outside the Government office where he was employed on small errands. A palm tree was his bookcase and he would slip his book or his newspaper into the crevices of the trunk when summoned into the house. Once I needed some wrapping paper and he went to the palm tree to see whether he had any saved. His opium was excellent, pure Laos opium, and he prepared the pipes admirably. Soon his employers would be packing up in Laos, he would go to France, he would have no more opium—all the ease of life would vanish with the boredom, but he was incapable of considering the future. His sad amused Asiatic face peered down at the pipe while his bony fingers kneaded and warmed the brown seed of contentment, and he spoke musically and precisely like a don on the types and years of opium—the opium of Laos, Yunan, Szechuan, Istanbul, Benares—ah, Benares, that was a kind to remember over the years.

January 13, 1954.

On again to Luang Prabang. Where Vientiane has two streets Luang Prabang has one, some shops, a tiny modest royal palace (the King is as poor as the state) and opposite the palace a steep hill crowned by a pagoda which contains—so it is believed—the giant footprint of Buddha. Little side streets run down to the Mekong, here full of water. There is a sense of trees, temples, small quiet homes, river and peace. One can see the whole town in half an hour's walk, and one could live here, one feels, for weeks, working, walking, sleeping, if the Vietminh were not on their way down from the mountains. We determined tomorrow before returning to take a boat up the Mekong to the grotto and the statue of Buddha which protects Luang Prabang from her enemies. There is more atmosphere of prayer in a pagoda than in most churches. The features of Buddha cannot be sentimentalized like the features of Christ, there are no hideous pictures on the wall, no stations of the Cross, no straining after unfelt agonies. Up the hill I found myself praying to Buddha as always when I enter a pagoda, for now surely he is among our saints and his intercession will be as powerful as the Little Flower's—perhaps more powerful here among a race akin to his own.

After dinner I was very tired, but five pipes of inferior opium—bitter with dross—smoked in a chauffeur's house made me feel fresh again. It was a house on piles and at the end of the long narrow verandah, screened from the dark and the mosquitos, a small son knelt at a table doing his lessons while his mother squatted beside him. The soft recitation of his lesson accompanied the murmur and bubble of the pipe.

January 16, 1954. Saigon.

Laos remained careless Laos till the end. I was fussed by the late arrival of the car and only just caught the plane which left the airfield at 7.0 in the dark. Two stops on the way to Saigon and in about 12.30. Why is it that Saigon is always so good to come back to? I remember on my first long journey to Africa, when I walked across Liberia, I used to dream of the delights of a hot bath, a good meal, a comfortable bed. I wanted to go straight from the African hut with the rats running down the wall at night to some luxury hotel in Europe and enjoy the contrast. In fact one never satisfactorily found the contrast—either in Liberia or later in Mexico. Civilization was always broken to one slowly: the trader's establishment at Grand Bassa was a great deal better than the jungle, the Consulate at Monrovia was better than the tradesman's house, the cargo boat was approaching civilization, by the time one reached England

the contrast had been completely lost. Here in Indo-China one does capture the contrast: Vientiane is a century away from Saigon.

After dinner I had seven pipes in the school for diplomas. I never got tired of picking my way between the school benches and up the wooden ladder, wondering what display of thin bony figures would be lying there in the half-dark. A Vietnamese always undresses to his pants for smoking, and all the way along the *fumerie* hang the long trousers.

January 18, 1954.

After drinking with M. and D. of the Surété and a dinner with a number of people from the Legation, I returned early to the hotel in order to meet a police commissioner (half-caste) and two Vietnamese plain clothes men who were going to take me on a tour of Saigon's night side. Our first *fumerie* was in the *paillote* district—a district of thatched houses in a bad state of repair. In a small yard off the main street one found a complete village life—there was a café, a restaurant, a brothel, a *fumerie*. We climbed up a wooden ladder to an attic immediately under the thatch. The sloping roof was too low to stand upright, so that one could only crawl from the ladder top onto one of the two big double mattresses spread on the floor covered with a clean white sheet. A cook was fetched and a girl, an attractive dirty slightly squint-eyed girl, who had obviously been summoned for my private pleasure. The police commissioner said, 'There is a saying that a pipe prepared by a woman is more sweet'. In fact the girl only went through the motions of warming the opium bead for a moment before handing it over to the expert cook. Not knowing how many *fumeries* the night would produce I smoked only two pipes, and after the first pipe the Vietnamese police scrambled discreetly down the ladder so that I could make use of the double bed. This I had no wish to do. If there had not been other reasons it would still have been difficult to concentrate on pleasure, with the three Vietnamese police officers at the bottom of the ladder, a few feet away, listening and drinking cups of tea. My only word of Vietnamese was 'No', and the girl's only word of English was 'OK', and it became a polite struggle between the two phrases.

At the bottom of the ladder I had a cup of tea with the police officers and the very beautiful madame who had the unruffled calm face of a young nun. I tried to explain to the Vietnamese commissioner that my interest tonight was in *ambiance* only. This damped the spirits of the party.

I asked them whether they could show me a more elegant brothel and they drove at once towards the outskirts of the city. It was now

A FEW PIPES

about one o'clock in the morning. We stopped by a small wayside café and entered. Immediately inside the door there was a large bed with a tumble of girls on it and one man emerging from the flurry. I caught sight of a face, a sleeve, a foot. We went through to the café and drank orangeade. The madame reminded me of the old Javanese bawd in *South Pacific*. When we left the man on the bed had gone and a couple of Americans sat among the girls, waiting for their pipes. One was bearded and gold-spectacled and looked like a professor and the other was wearing white shorts. The night was very mosquito-y and he must have been bitten almost beyond endurance. Perhaps that made his temper short. He seemed to think we had come in to close the place and resented us.

After the loud angry voices of the Americans, the bearded face and the fat knees, it was a change to enter a Chinese *fumerie* in Cholon. Here in this place of bare wooden shelves were quiet and courtesy. The price of pipes—one price for small pipes and one price for large pipes—hung on the wall. I had never seen this before in a *fumerie*. I smoked two pipes only and the Chinese proprietor refused to allow me to pay. He said I was the first European to smoke there and that he would not take my money. It was 2.30 and I went home to bed. I had disappointed my Vietnamese companions. In the night I woke dispirited by the badness of the play I was writing and tried unsuccessfully to revise it in my mind.

January 20, 1954. Pnomh Penh.

After dinner my host and I drove to the centre of Pnomh Penh and parked the car. I signalled to a trishaw driver, putting my thumb in my mouth and making a gesture rather like a long nose. This is always understood to mean that one wants to smoke. He led us to a rather dreary yard off the Rue A—. There were a lot of dustbins, a rat moved among them, and a few people lay under shabby mosquito nets. Upstairs on the first floor, off a balcony, was the *fumerie*. It was fairly full and the trousers were hanging like banners in a cathedral nave. I had eight pipes and a distinguished looking man in under pants helped to translate my wishes. He was apparently a teacher of English.

February 9, 1954. Saigon.

After dinner at the Arc en Ciel, to the *fumerie* opposite the Casino above the school. I had only five pipes, but that night was very dopey. First I had a nightmare, then I was haunted by squares—architectural squares which reminded me of Angkor, equal distances, etc, and then mathematical squares—people's income, etc,

square after square after square which seemed to go on all the night. At last I woke and when I slept again I had a strange complete dream such as I have only experienced after opium. I was coming down the steps of a club in St James's Street and on the steps I met the Devil who was wearing a tweed motoring coat and a deerstalker cap. He had long black Edwardian moustaches. In the street a girl, with whom I was apparently living, was waiting for me in a car. The Devil stopped me and asked whether I would like to have a past year to live again or to skip a year and see what would be happening to me two years from now. I told him I had no wish to live over any year again and I would like to have a glimpse of two years ahead. Immediately the Devil vanished and I was holding in my hands a letter. I opened the letter—it was from some girl whom I only slightly knew. It was a very tender letter, and a letter of farewell. Obviously during that missing year we had reached a relationship which she was now ending. Looking down at the woman in the car I thought 'I must not show her the letter, for how absurd it would be if she were to be jealous of a girl whom I hardly know because of the future'. I went into my room (I was no longer in the club) and tore the letter into small pieces, but at the bottom of the envelope were some beads which must have had a sentimental significance. I was unwilling to destroy these and opening a drawer put them in and locked the drawer. As I did so it suddenly occurred to me, 'in two years' time I shall be doing just this, opening a drawer, putting away the beads, and finding the beads already in the drawer'. Then I woke.

Expostulation & Inadequate Reply



I wish you would write a poem, in blank verse, addressed to those who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness, disguising the same under the soft titles of domestic attachment and contempt for visionary *philosophes*—Coleridge to Wordsworth, 1799.

Alas! dear Coleridge, I am not the man,
After a century and a half, to write
That poem—of another Revolution
And yet another generation of
Poets who, since the age holds out no hope,
Abjure the age and its attempted changers,
Trying to find in personal love their tropes
For poetry and reason for their lives.
It will not do: their verse is sloppy and
Their beings trivial or meaningless.
For still the active world maintains the turn
It took when you were young, and posed against
Its harsh demands for truth and sacrifice
The useless poet must arrange himself
With care if he is not to be an adjunct
Reactionary or irrelevant.
Of course, my only difference is I know
How weak I am, what strength the times require:
Attempting to disown the spurious virtue
That springs from guilt and from the making out
Of paths I dare not tread.

I wonder how
(Writing these lines beneath the gentle gold
That streams obliquely from the branches soon

ROY FULLER

To show entirely their essential structure)
Precisely you regarded that autumnal
World which arrived so quickly after spring.
Could you imagine yet another chance
For tyranny to die, for men to make
An order of equality and right?
You did not sink, I know, immediately
Into acceptance of the status quo,
The old lies and the old injustices.
And history, although you could not tell,
Was gathering up the scattered elements
To make in time another grand assault
Upon the barricades of privilege,
Islands of class, the beaches of selfish atoms,
And will again, though it's our tragedy
— And opportunity — that history
Is only the totality of action
By many men who each alone are blind
To what they do, and may do.

Seen far off

The forest's million bones are smudged with bands
Of bistre, raw sienna, faded green.
Sad season of the end of growth, the start
Of cold that seems, in this faint sun, will be
Unbearable! And yet it will be borne,
And those who can survive will find the new,
Delicate but sure republic of the crocus,
The warm fraternal winds, the growing strength
Of wheat and apple's equal luxury.

This could not be the poem you desired.
We grow to understand that words alone,
The visionary gleam through which the poet
More and more consciously, less frequently,
Renews his youth, are, like all art, condemned
To failure in the sense that they succeed.
You, who so early lost that power, knew best
How men forever seek, not quite in vain,
Sublime societies of imagination
In worlds like this, and that no more exist.

ANNA KAVAN

Happy Name



It had never occurred to Miss Letty that her father was tempting providence when he gave the name Letitia to his only child. But she preferred the abbreviation, which was used by everybody at her old home. And now, though for a long time she hadn't heard it, it was definitely as Miss Letty that she entered her dream . . . bringing in from the garden a basket of summer flowers, which she would arrange like exploding rainbows in the dark old formal rooms.

The door shut behind her, hiding the bright day, and was itself hidden behind a gloomy tapestry hung from a halberd. In the mirror across the dim hall, Miss Letty faced the tall pale girl with her basket, her height accentuated by the long skirt, her thin neck elongated by the stiff stand-up collar, so that she had a little the look of a solitary long-necked bird, wading and peering out warily from the shadows. Narrow windows and panelled walls, nearly black, made this hall a dark cave, even at midday in midsummer. Like all the surrounding rooms, it was full of shadows, and of large heavy dark ancient things that seemed to have grown there, like stalactites: huge immovable pieces of blackish furniture and faded brocades; massively framed indistinct portraits lowering from the walls; antique weapons; and the dusty disintegrating heads of strange beasts, only resembling nature in their staring, baleful or sad or accusing eyes. But where a stranger would probably have found all this moribund and forbidding, Miss Letty saw only the changeless familiarity of her ancestral home. Here, and nowhere else in the world, was where she belonged; she was at home and at one with her surroundings, as she looked from one door to another, considering which room to decorate first.

Not her father's study, of course: the master of the house did not care for her kaleidoscopic floral arrangements; or indeed, for flowers at all, except in the garden, their proper place. If flowers must be brought indoors—and, with indulgent male superiority, he con-

ceded the point, humouring the feminine whim — at least let there be dignity in their arrangement, a congruity of kind and colour; not a mad riot of brilliance, only appropriate in a gypsy's caravan.

Miss Letty glanced down guiltily at her basket, overflowing with a bright unseemly jumble of poppies and larkspurs, columbines, marigolds, zinnias, peonies, canterbury bells — overflowing literally, she observed; an obstreperous tangle of cornflowers and scabious had fallen on to the floor, and she snatched the flowers up hurriedly. But as fast as she put them back in the basket, others escaped, flamboyantly declaring their presence, deliberately trying to draw attention to themselves, and so give her away.

Suddenly nervous, she glanced about, half expecting to see her father emerge from the shadows, though he seldom left his own rooms. Suddenly there was an atmosphere of repression and disapproval. Hundreds of times before, she had filled the house with flowers of every colour under the sun, only avoiding his special precincts, and seen no harm in it. But now she felt ashamed as if she'd done so behind his back, remembering her childhood and his fulminations against deceit, that craven sin of the low-born, unthinkable in a person of breeding. The contents of her basket, no longer innocent, had become an embarrassment, to be disposed of without delay . . . but somehow this seemed beyond her powers. . . .

Again she met the pale mirrored face, all eyes, poised warily on the thin neck; suddenly, apprehensively, it darted aside. The study door opened: and she, caught in the senseless panic of dreams, could neither speak nor move. She was the culprit, caught in the underhand act, with her flaring basket. She did not dare to look at the tall finely-built man, somewhat formidable in his aspect of stern authority, but kept her eyes on the mass of flowerheads, some of which shattered, and spilled their vivid incriminating petals about her feet. Hardly knowing what she was doing, she knelt to gather them up, sweeping them together clumsily, crushing the silky frivolous shreds in her unsteady hands, made more awkward by her acute awareness of the tall figure towering over her like a symbol of rectitude. There she crouched, like a humble suppliant before him. . . .

'What a baby she is still . . . playing with pretty flowers. . . .'

Was it possible that she'd heard aright? That he wasn't angry? That after all she had not offended. . . ? Could her severe undemonstrative father have spoken so mildly and playfully? She really didn't dare to believe in the fantastic moment, as, still more incredible, his hand fell and lingered in vague paternal benevolence on her hair.

'Pretty hair, Letty. . . . Fine soft hair. . . .' The hand, faintly lemon-scented, shaped itself to her skull, the fingers gently putting aside

the controlling ribbon, feeling the bony shape through the thick auburn waves. 'And a good head . . . a well-bred little head. . . I'm proud of my girl. . .'

Now there could be no more doubt; no possibility of mistake. All of a sudden her love surged up out of the improbable guilty moment, while she knelt at his feet. Like a djinn magically released, it swelled enormously, towering above them both, tremendous and overwhelming. Miss Letty kept still as a mouse, never stirring, in case a movement should break the miraculous fragile bubble-moment and its treasure be lost—the precious rarity of his displayed affection.

'But you're not really my little girl any longer, are you? You're a grown-up young lady . . . soon you'll forget your old father—go off and leave him. . .'

The not-quite-genuine playfulness of his voice did not, and was not meant, to disguise the underlying reproach. And this was too much for her. The whole implication that it was in her power to assert herself independently, even to hurt him, was too much for her to accept immediately . . . coming so suddenly and unexpectedly into her lifetime of humble childish obedience; too disturbing. His signet ring caught in her hair; she gasped, putting up her hand, using the barely perceptible pain as a pretext for breaking away from a too-confusing emotion.

Her father, however, still persisted, perhaps experiencing an unimaginable moment of loneliness, saying with a smile: 'Promise you'll stay, then . . . promise not to leave your old father alone. . .'

The quick adjustment already made now, she could accept the splendid advancement to the responsibility of a near-equal, as love mounted in cloudlike waves, filling the world with its instantaneous blinding architecture, leaving no room for doubt. He needed her. . . . This was her magnificent prize . . . for which she gladly exchanged childhood's carefree protection and privilege. 'Never. . . . Of course I'll never leave you. . . .' Suddenly she felt a woman's indignation because he had thought it necessary to exact a promise. The djinn subsided tamely, once more under control: the incredible moment was over.

But for a little longer Miss Letty remained entranced by her new status, which gave her, as she grew accustomed to it, a sense of adult importance. She couldn't help gloating over it a little, until she noticed that in the meantime her father had disappeared.

He had only gone back to his study, she told herself several times, but was not reassured. An unaccountable uneasiness suddenly possessed her; she repeated that he must be in one of his rooms as if she

were afraid that he might not be in the house at all. . . . 'I'll go and find him,' she decided, to settle the matter. At once she took a few steps forward, cautiously surveying the shadows ahead, like a heron exploring a pool . . . then paused uncertainly, darting quick nervous glances in all directions. Impossible as it was for change to break into this house, something seemed different; she was no longer entirely at ease. During the brief period of her preoccupation, something seemed to have happened, irrevocable, by which everything else was effected . . . nothing was, or ever could be, quite the same as before. Attempting to comfort herself by recalling her father's display of affection, she could only remember him as aloof and severe; all she could hear was the voice of terrifying politeness he used in anger. She must find him: only his actual presence could banish these vague alarms. But what if he'd really gone . . . left the house, without telling her where he was going? In spite of the extreme improbability of such an act on the part of one whose comings and goings had an almost ritual fixity, she couldn't get rid of the unnerving idea.

Pivoting on her thin neck, her head twisted and turned in bird-like attitudes, then suddenly froze, listening intently. Not a sound could she hear. But this only made more disturbing her fixed conviction that something had entered a distant part of the house—something frightening. Fear itself had come in, and was coming towards her. . . . A sequence of quickly dissolving views passed before her mind's eye: the wings and turrets, all the odd bays and excrescences, added at different epochs, with their labyrinthine connecting passages, their anterooms, steps up or down; all the complicated geography of the outlying parts of the mansion, in use, or crumbling into decay. It wasn't easy to find the way through: it took time. Long before whatever had entered came anywhere near her, she would be safe with her father, in whose presence fear could not exist.

Timid but resolute now, she resumed her advance, as if to storm the black wall of shadows under the gallery. She could no longer see the doors, for suddenly twilight had fallen; here, in the depth of the hall, it was already dark. Her outstretched hand, gliding over the panels, met a doorknob and turned it: it wasn't the right room, so on she went to the next . . . afterwards opening several doors in succession. Like a row of loyal retainers, each door conscientiously promised protection, closing against all intruders with a reassuringly final thud. But none of the thick old heavy doors led to the study; though each in turn revealed a room which at the first glance seemed the one she wanted . . . each room was *almost* the right one. . . .

HAPPY NAME

An indescribable unsureness had come upon her; a sensation which, in her own home, seemed both baffling and very sad. All the rooms were alike in the deepening dusk, hushed and immense, their solemn monumental furnishings presided over somewhat menacingly by brooding chandeliers. In some she heard clocks ticking. And once a twig scratched on the window pane like a conspirator's nail — she hurried out of that room, shutting the door upon its unheard message. The next she recognized by its majestic size as the drawing-room, and was on the point of retiring again, when a graceful shape like a gondola's gilded prow swam out of the shadows, thrusting towards her as if it had something to say; it was the harp her dead mother had played. No one had played on it since, the neglected strings hung down loose and broken; and they twanged so lugubriously when she touched them in vague sympathy, that she fled from their sound also.

'Hurry! Don't waste any more time!' she suddenly whispered, with a new urgent sense of the threat of that unknown thing, still far off, but coming steadily nearer . . . closer to her every second . . . moving shadowless through the house . . . with soundless relentless tread . . . the abstraction of fear. 'I must make haste,' she told herself, pushing the blouse into her belt with a schoolgirl's gesture that stood for defiance. The folds of her skirt flew out like spread wings as she sped away.

Breathless, coming to a door which should not have been there, she paused to get her bearings. Of course she couldn't be lost in her own home . . . it was too absurd. Yet somehow she couldn't quite make out where she was: . . . which door could be opening in front of her, inviting her in. Unsure of her ground, she went forward dubiously, poised hesitant, ready for instant flight, on the threshold. A man's silhouette stood against the dusk-filled window: as she saw it, all her nervousness vanished, and she went in eagerly, holding out both her hands: 'Father!'

It was, however, a very much younger man, who came to meet her so quickly that before she could drop her hands he had clasped them tight. With the dim light behind him she hadn't seen his face; and now it was hidden, bent over her hands as though he wanted to kiss them. She pulled away. But he wouldn't release her, talking urgently, fast, in argument or persuasion.

Miss Letty didn't listen to what he was saying. She refused to hear, or to look at him, only wanting to go to her father. It made no sense in the world that a young man should try to persuade her to do something, go somewhere, with him. She felt the ominous pressure of memories she refused to admit. She would not remember him,

recognize him. He was nothing to her. She waited simply to be allowed to go. Only, when the sound of his desperate pleading brought home to her the fact that he really was deeply moved, she thought, 'How strange,' feeling something begin to stir in her like an awakening.

But just at this moment he gave up, let go of her hands, turned in a queer blind groping towards a chair, dropped his face in his hands. For a second she stood looking down at his bowed shoulders and ruffled hair—the whole posture so young and unhappy—and her hand started through the air tentatively, as if it might touch him. But before the gesture was complete she forgot it, her hand returned slowly to her side . . . as whatever it was in her that had scarcely started its life expired without pain. . . . Thinking only of finding her father she hurried out, and shut the door after her.

Somebody was waiting for her outside, she perceived, unalarmed . . . feeling an emanation of well-known warmth and protection . . . even before she caught sight of a milky moon floating in deepest shadow; the mild moon face of the old governess, who had loved and taught her, and kept her motherless childhood from loneliness. Miss Letty could feel the whole climate of yesterday . . . sunshine, security, trust, tranquil affection . . . for a moment the shabby old schoolroom was there, smelling of ink and chocolate and the papery looking tea roses around the open window . . . where the governess sat sewing, her lap full of coloured skeins. 'You'll help me find father, won't you?' she said, with a child's habit of trustfulness, coming back to her present search.

To her surprise there was no answer. Doubt beginning to dawn in her, she strained her eyes, trying to see the face so close to hers; which remained obstinately a blurred moon, expression indistinguishable; it seemed divided from her by a new strangeness. Some reassurance she had confidently expected to find there was, for the first time, absent; and its absence struck the first clear note of dismay. Change had deprived her of this support which had never failed. A shadowy stranger seemed to be standing there . . . grown larger than life . . . blocking her way when she tried to pass . . . gripping her by the wrist. Suddenly all sunshine was gone from the world, all affection; there was no more trust. One of those wandering draughts which, regardless of season, frequent the passages of large old houses, now stole past, bringing the chill of the approaching night, sweeping away the sunny vision of childhood . . . to which she longed desperately, hopelessly, to return.

'Listen, Letty—I must warn you. . . .' The shadow began to address her, not in ordinary speech, but by means of some interior mode of

communication, wordless, supernatural, impossible to escape 'Don't do what I did—Don't make the same mistake . . . of trying to live for others . . . as I have . . . so that I've had no life, no child, of my own. You must live your own life. You can't live for or through other people. Don't run away from your life. Letty. . . . Go back now, to the man who loves you . . . needs you . . . while it's still possible . . . before it's too late. . . .'

In astonished alarm, Miss Letty could only say: 'Father loves me—and he needs me . . . ' more by way of protest than in response to this voiceless exhortation . . . of which she only confusedly understood that she'd been urged to return to the situation she had just left, with all its dangerous memories and associations. They seemed to gather in a black amorphous mass overhead, threatening to descend upon her. Surely this couldn't be the kind old governess, who had always come between her and anything sad or bad—she wouldn't want to bring down such a crushing weight on her head. . . . Her wide scared eyes stared at the shadowy jailer, who held her fast, and, aware of her doubts, said silently—perhaps through the touch of her unseen fingers: 'Trust me, Letty, dear . . . I've always loved you like my own child. I'd never hurt you or tell you to do anything wrong. . . . I simply want you to enjoy the happiness I've missed. Your life is just starting. . . . Because I love you I can't bear to see you in danger. . . . I must warn you not to make a fatal mistake. . . . It's so important—your future . . . your whole life . . . depends on what you do now. . . . Think over my warning, child. . . . Think carefully, I implore you. . . .'

But poor Miss Letty could think of nothing but that impending threat, and the chasm which now seemed to be opening before her. 'I promised I wouldn't leave Father!' she cried. And, feeling herself being driven towards the precipice of an impossible choice, she tugged at her wrist, vainly trying to free it from the other's invisible grip.

'But he will leave you,' the remorseless inward voice continued. 'Your father won't be there always. . . . Your life will still go on afterwards. . . . Have you thought that you might be left quite alone when he's gone?'

Although she couldn't exclude the words, conveyed into her nerves and bloodstream, Miss Letty closed her mind to their meaning, sensing something unspeakable, blasphemous, of which she would know nothing. With all her might she rejected this abomination, refusing it with such intense aversion that, without really knowing what she was struggling against, she at length succeeded in freeing herself, and darted off.

'This may be your only chance—don't throw it away. . . .' Some such words accompanied her as an interior echo, while she stumbled, half running, along dim corridors where their warning sound gradually faded out. Her agitation evaporated, she forgot why she was hurrying, as soon as she saw that her blind flight had brought her to a passage, terminating in a certain door—she recognized it at once, distinguishing it from every other door in the house, by the dull gleam of gilt wreaths on the architrave.

At last she was in sight of safety, alone except for the shadows, which had been her companions so long that she regarded them indulgently, like strays that had attached themselves to her, loyal, though rather stupid. They must mean to protect her by standing in front of the door, thinking that there was danger on the other side; not realizing, the silly shadows, that this was the door of her father's room, where fear could not enter. Like stubborn black cattle they bunched there and wouldn't move; she had to push her way through them with swimming strokes, thrust them aside, before she could reach the door.

Most strangely, here, the fear which had hitherto kept its distance, remotely stalking her through the house, suddenly came quite close—right at the entrance to safety, it suddenly seemed to touch her. She looked wildly about. Nothing was to be seen but the shadows. Yet fear, and the smell of fear, unmistakable, filled the air . . . so close and strong that for a moment she couldn't breathe . . . her hand flew up to her collar, too tight suddenly—choking her.

Calling upon some last reserve of ancestral pride, Miss Letty stood firm . . . telling herself that fear had arrived too late . . . here, at the very door of the sanctuary, it could not harm her. One more step, and she would be safe. But this last step was harder to take than all the rest put together. Strength had deserted her body; and now, assailed by a premonition of mortal dread, even her spirit began to fail. Before she could lift her hand, encased in a leaden glove, to the doorknob, eternities of time and effort elapsed.

And, when at last the door opened, a terrible sound arose. The house cried out. At first not very loudly. But as room after room added its composite voice with all the voices of its contents, the cry spread like an organ note in swelling volume, from cellars to eaves and ridgepoles and to the outermost walls, making a soundingbox of the great house; the countless separate cries merged in one vast lamentation—a cry of anguish, cosmic, elemental. Such a sound, magnified to infinity, as a mighty tree could be thought to give, after centuries, meeting its end, not by the clean stroke of axe or lightning, but through the base crawling stranglehold of a parasite, or rotting

taint of internal corruption.

Floor, walls, ceiling, and the space between were all vibrating with this appalling sound, as, crying, 'Father, save me!' Miss Letty plunged through the door into the further room. She didn't hear her own voice; her hands covered her ears. Silence—to escape into silence: that was her only thought, her one need. Nothing else in the world mattered. There was nothing else in the world . . . but this fearful resonance . . . going on and on . . . even here, within the walls she had believed inviolable. So the shadows had been right, it seemed, after all. . . . It was here, in this room, where she had expected to be secure from all dangers, that fear waited for her . . . on the other side of the door, while she stood on the threshold, fear had pushed past her and entered the sanctuary . . . which was no sanctuary at all. . . .

There was very little light in the room; but enough to show her the high still shape on the bed, which was fear's own shape. With all her will she tried not to see it . . . indeed, she had hardly looked in that direction. Her glance had swerved, almost before it got to the bed, deflected by some warning instinct; with a bird's glancing swiftness, it had darted away. But in that split second, fear, blazing through her eyes, reached her central being, and left there its indelible imprint. What she had seen in that minute fragment of time she now knew . . . and could never un-know. With awful hopelessness, she felt the knowledge embedded deeply in her, for ever more. The vague memory of a premonition made it seem that she had had a nightmare come true.

Meanwhile, the dream having failed to achieve its object, the dreamer began to wake. She felt some new horror of change impending; an end was approaching that was more a beginning; but the beginning of something already hated, far too well known. She kept her eyes sealed against this despised repetition; she would shut out the intrusive unwanted light. But other senses, less easily controlled, made the exclusion futile, forcing recognition upon her.

The room where she was had its distinctive smell, faint, elusive, hard to define; harder still not to recognize. She couldn't avoid the smell of dust and uncared-for age; or the atmosphere of impersonal dreary discouragement, peculiar to this type of cheap hotel room, not too clean, and both cold and stuffy. The furniture, assembled, regardless of suitability, by a process of rejection from other rooms, was here undergoing its last spell of usefulness on the way to the scrapheap; it exhaled something of the despairing patience, not even reproachful, of broken-down horses performing their final labours before being sent to the knacker's yard. A few scattered personal

possessions, salvage from a prosperity dead and gone, seemed lost and unhappy, unable to assert their intrinsic merit in the proximity of so many objects devoid of all dignity, the very pathos of which was obscured by the general meanness.

One of these incongruous marooned relics was the first thing to meet Miss Letty's reluctantly opening eyes: a framed painting of a country house in parklike grounds, which hung, slightly crooked, at the end of a knotted string. Lying motionless on the narrow bed, she kept her eyes fastened on the picture, the only thing in the room she could bear to see. She couldn't bear to take her eyes off her home—there it stood, a big white house with a columned façade. To her fixed gaze, it seemed to be losing the smallness and flatness and the prettiness of the conventional painting; assuming the size and stereoscopic aspect of the real thing . . . as she hastened backward and inward into herself, in pursuit of her dream.

It sometimes happened that, if she were quick and determined enough, she could catch in this way the escaping dream and re-enter it through the picture. Occasionally, at the moment of waking, the picture would become real and allow her to enter: she would go in and walk up through the long flowery grass of the painted meadows where cattle grazed by the stream . . . across the sloping lawns with their cedars . . . right up to the door of her home.

But not this time. She couldn't pay the admission price of undeviating attention. Something else was all the time worrying her, clamouring for her notice. She stirred in one of the passing physical discomforts of age, her hand straying restlessly over the cotton bed-spread, her eyes still fixed on the picture. Suddenly the feeling of the cheap material got through fingertips to her brain—her heart gave a sudden jump; picture and dream were forgotten.

Why was she lying on her bed, fully dressed, in broad daylight? As always now in circumstances that were in the least unusual, she felt panic floundering like a clumsy bird in her head and chest; its flapping wings dispersed her thoughts in all directions; made her heart pound in confused agitation. Was she ill? Immediately she clapped one hand over her mouth, as though it had spoken aloud a forbidden word. 'Oh, no . . . I mustn't be ill,' she whispered. 'Whatever happens, I mustn't. . . .' She manoeuvred her stiff old body off the edge of the creaking bed, and the floor tilted alarmingly, so that she had to cling for a moment to the iron bed rail. 'Oh, Lord, let me not be ill. . . .' With this fervent prayer, she was launched on the voyage across the room, steering a precarious zigzag course, like an old damaged cargo boat left behind by the convoy, through the clutter of nameless oddments—empty cardboard boxes, stacks of old maga-

zines. . . .

By the time she got to the mirror, sweat made every wrinkle a glistening thread. Indifferently she dabbed her handkerchief at the glazed face, netted with lines as if held in a shiny string-bag, which looked back from the clouded glass. Hot and heavy and damp, her hair clung to her neck and forehead. She poked a bony finger into the clinging mass, lifting it here and there from the scalp . . . while, like a fish rising from the depths of a murky pool, a long-lost recollection came back from the past—her father forbidding her to cut off her hair like everyone else, saying it was an ugly decadent fashion, and that he liked to look at her pretty hair. 'But I'm the one who's had the bother of it all these years,' she grumbled, resentfully tugging a comb through the greyish waves. Suddenly she felt resentful as though her father had left her the legacy of some useless exigent pet, always requiring attention. She was hot and tired now, and aching in all her joints, and yet she must waste on it some of her meagre strength. . . .

Interrupting her grievance, a peremptory booming began in the depths of the house, mounting in frantic metallic waves, impossible to ignore. Miss Letty faced the door: but for the moment could get no further towards obeying the imperious summons, immobilized by a sense of nauseated refusal in mind and body. As though the food were already in front of her, she felt the strange acrobatics of sickness, somersaulting and swinging up from her stomach to close her throat.

In the midst of this sick preoccupation, she suddenly clenched her hands, thinking: 'Mrs Coe mustn't know there's anything wrong with me.' She knew the proprietress wanted to get rid of her, and would gladly make illness the pretext for turning her out, so that the room could be let to a more prosperous, more profitable tenant. Once she had stayed in bed for a few days with influenza. And the proprietress, who rarely exchanged a word with the less important guests, had visited her room and conversed meaningfully of staff difficulties and the carrying of trays to invalids, staring fixedly at her all the time; thus informing her, as clearly as if she had said it in so many words, that there must be no more illness . . . or else—Duly intimidated, Miss Letty had lived ever since in terror of falling ill. What would happen to her if she had to leave? Where would she ever find another room as cheap as this one? The mere thought of having to search for a new home, pack all her belongings, made the bird of panic set up a disastrous flapping inside her.

Now she forced her old bones into motion, fighting down bodily weakness like an enemy, almost too strong, yet held rigorously in

subjection. Emerging on to the grimy staircase, the three flights to the ground floor faced her with an ordeal on which she embarked forthwith, giving herself no time to be daunted. A painful reluctant heaviness was in all her limbs. To lower her awkward unwilling frame from one step to the next was an undertaking, an achievement both of balance and will-power; the whole descent an enterprise which could succeed only through the absolute concentration of all her forces. She was entirely absorbed in this effort of locomotion, her head empty of everything but a rune, a rhymed incantation, 'Mrs Coe mustn't know,' which continued to echo long after its meaning was lost.

In due course, Miss Letty arrived on the lower landing, in sight of her destination. A steamy clatter came through the open door of the dining-room, the smell of today's greens mingling with the aroma of past meals. She noticed none of this, however, still utterly absorbed, alone with the intensity of the effort not yet complete, isolated by preoccupation, as if in a different world. When another door opened closer to her she remained equally unaware; oblivious of the two people who came out on to the landing. Before she realized what was happening, the proprietress was nearly on top of her. Suddenly looking up, there she saw the big woman, her bosom jutting forward aggressively, almost hiding the man at her side.

'It's not fair, doctor,' she was saying to this man indignantly. 'I can't be responsible. . . . It's unfair to the staff. . . . She must go if she's no better tomorrow. You'll just have to find a bed for her somewhere. . . . She can't stay here.'

Miss Letty, at the first sound of that frightening voice, had stopped in her tracks. The angry complaining voice, bursting so violently and abruptly into the silent privacy of her single-minded endeavour, had shocked her like the trump of doom, with its terrible words that unerringly travelled straight to her deepest dread. Her heart gave one struggling leap, dashing against the wall of her chest, then fell back and did not move again. She stood absolutely rigid in frozen terror between the stairs and the dangerous bosom. Even her heart had stopped dead; but, as in dreams, the stairs rose like a flock of birds, soaring up past her hair. She didn't hear whether the proprietress said anything more, or whether a reply came from the man holding the little bag. She was listening to the silence of her unmoving heart.

But then all at once she became aware of the two faces looking at her: one large, white and menacing, but also clownish, the mouth painted thickly a sticky red; the other melancholy, with the drooping jowls of a sad hound. They seemed suddenly to have appeared there, she saw them very closely and plainly, and somehow significantly,

because, from all the chaos of her agitation, they had emerged, like a pair of birds flying quietly out of a raging storm. There was a sense of something meaningful and mysterious, almost magic, not in the faces themselves, but about their coming. It sent a peculiar spasm through her, and her heart began beating again.

Now Miss Letty could start to collect herself. She still felt confused; but she was no longer frightened, now that she'd seen Mrs Coe's clownish face. That gaudy mouth . . . nothing, surely, but buffoonery could come out of it . . . the dreadful words it had spoken could mean no more than the crude cruel jokes of the ring—she knew that they didn't concern her. Seeing the stairs lying quietly in their proper place, proffering the example of their orderly patient descent, she braced her shoulders and stiffened her spine, standing bolt upright, lean and lank and sapless inside the voluminous black garments, which hung on her loosely, as on a gaunt scarecrow made of bean sticks and as tall as a grenadier. Her face had already put on automatically its public protective screen. The old skin, mapped with wrinkles and broken veins, was like a mask assumed deliberately. Her whole decrepit antique exterior seemed a sort of grotesque disguise, behind which she withdrew herself from the watching eyes.

Getting into difficult motion again, she inclined her head slightly, in by-gone formal politeness, as she passed the onlookers, resuming the laboured descent, which, to them, scarcely seemed to have been interrupted. Stiffly, slowly, jerkily, with infinite caution and immense resolution, she went on down the stairs, as though these two people no longer existed.

But they still looked after her, held by some peculiar magnetism, to which they had both unconsciously surrendered; deserting for the moment their own affairs in order to follow this erratic progress; which should have seemed laughable, like the dusty-looking be-draggled black, which somehow failed to make its wearer a figure of fun.

For a few seconds longer they stood there, unsmiling and in vague discomfort; vaguely aware of something unfamiliar and powerful to which they could give no name and by which they seemed obscurely diminished. It was as though their positions had been reversed, and, instead of the more-or-less contemptuous assurance of their normal attitude, they felt momentarily at a disadvantage . . . inferior in some way to that old image . . . who completely ignored them . . . resolutely going her way . . . placing each step with the meticulous accuracy and circumspection of some outlandish solitary bird of an almost extinct species.

VERNON WATKINS

A True Picture Restored

Memories of Dylan Thomas



Nearer the pulse than other themes
His deathborn claims are pressed.
Fired first by Milton, then the dreams
Of Herbert's holy breast,
Out of his days the sunlight streams
And fills the burning West.

I look where soon the frosty Plough
Shall hang above the sill
And see the colours westward flow
To green Carmarthen's hill.
There sinks the sky of changes now
On waters never still.

Praise God, although a time is gone
That shall not come again,
If ever morning rightly shone,
A glass to make all plain,
The man I mourn can make it live,
Every fallen grain.

I see the house where we would meet;
I see my steps return,
Kicking the sparks of the Swansea street,
And still those windows burn,
Struck by the sunrise hour of life
With all men's lives to learn.

A TRUE PICTURE RESTORED

The latest dead, the latest dead,
How should he have died,
He, in whom Eden's morning
Had left its ancient pride,
Adam, God, the maiden,
Love, and the yearning side?

And Wales, when shall you have again
One so true as he,
Whose hand was on the mountain's heart,
The rising of the sea,
And every praising bird that cries
Above the estuary?

He never let proud nature fall
Out of its pristine state.
The hunchback fed upon a love
That made the crooked straight,
No single promise broken
On which the heart must wait.

The heron poised above the glass
With straight and stabbing bill,
Among the water's moods that pass
Choosing to strike and kill,
Transfixed the sky with holiest eye
When the whole heart was still.

Down to the solstice moves the sun
And through Saint Lucie's night
Under the earth all rivers run
Back to the birth of light.
Among the living he was one
Who felt the world in flight.

Climbing Cwmdonkin's dock-based hill,
I found his lamp-lit room,
The great light in the forehead
Watching the water's loom,
Compiling there his doomsday book
Or dictionary of doom.

VERNON WATKINS

More times than I can bring to mind
I heard him reading there.
His eyes with fervour could make blind
All clocks about a stair
On which the assenting foot divined
The void and clustered air.

That was the centre of the world,
That was the hub of time.
The complex vision faded now,
The simple grew sublime.
There seemed no other valid stair
For wondering feet to climb.

That strictest, lie-disrobing act
Testing the poem read
Which, after toil and plumbing,
Left the first cause unsaid,
Showed me his nature then as now,
The life he gave the dead.

There, near Cwmdonkin, first and last,
Witness of lives below,
He held the unrisen wisdom fast
From heaven in overthrow,
Where lamps of hooded meaning cast
Light on the words below.

And later, in that toppling house
Over the village hearse,
Where the Portreeve assembled
His birds and characters,
It was the dying earth he gave
To heaven in living verse.

In London, when the blinds were drawn
Blackening a barbarous sky,
He plucked, beneath the accusing beams,
The mote out of his eye.
In the one death his eye discerned
The death all deaths must die.

A TRUE PICTURE RESTORED

'My immortality,' he said,
'Now matters to my soul
Less than the deaths of others.'
Would not the script enrol
Every forgotten character
If Shakespeare held the scroll?

The latest dead, the latest dead,
What power could pull him down
Who on a breath of vision
Could animate a town,
Could plunder every shy retreat
And give the lost renown?

Not by the wars of human minds
Nor by the jealous word
Nor by the black of London's blinds
Or coffin's rattling cord,
But by the stillness of that voice
The picture is restored.

Let each whose soul is in one place
Still to that place be true.
The man I mourn could honour such
With every breath he drew.
I never heard him wish to take
A life from where it grew.

And yet the man I mourn is gone,
He who could give the rest
So much to live for till the grave,
And do it all in jest.
Hard it must be, beyond this day,
For even the grass to rest.

A Walk in the Snow



‘When it is dark,’ Johanna said, ‘we shall go for a walk through the village and look through the windows at the lighted Christmas trees. We shall see the beaming faces of the children in the candlelight as they see what the *Christkind* has brought them. I think it will please you.’

That afternoon, Christmas Eve, Rodney had brought Johanna to the hotel in the Austrian village where the intelligence unit to which he belonged had arranged their celebrations. They had driven there from the town in which they were stationed through the pass which was the centre of their present investigation. The previous winter, as the war neared its end, a column of Jews had been savagely persecuted there on their way from one concentration camp to another. Now for a while the soldiers could forget their unsavoury work, each man free to enjoy himself in whatever way he pleased. Most of them had come to the hotel accompanied by a woman, and their celebrations had begun with a cocktail party.

From that Rodney had early escaped with Johanna. It had been an uncomfortable hour, in which the women, some Austrian, some German, some in the privileged class known those first months following the war as stateless, had eyed each other with suspicious reserve, knowing no common ground except that each was attached to an English soldier, and the men had plied the drinks with forced joviality, striving to weld the whole into a party.

The deserted village street, in the shady corners of which, covered with dust, lay hard snow from the first slight fall of a week ago, creaked under their feet as they circled the white-washed church with its painted wooden Madonna and walked along between the houses until the village petered out, leaving a clear view of the big mountains in the distance, striped blue and amber in the fading sunlight. Rodney held Johanna’s arm tightly, grateful to her for having come here with him, for being prepared for his sake to number herself

among the prostitutes. Seeing her quiet grace among their vulgarity, hearing her slow almost correct English against the carelessly remembered slang of the others, each echoing the particular mannerisms of the soldier to whom she was attached, he felt moved by her difference, by her implicit worth.

They turned and looked down on the village falling away below them. The stillness was broken only by the country sounds of goats and chickens and the thud of a chopper on wood, sharp and resilient in the crisp cold air. Only occasionally did they see another human being. Already, it seemed, the families were gathered into the houses for the festival, the spirit of each home already turned inwards.

It was then that Johanna announced her wish to walk through the village after darkness and gaze in at the windows of the celebrating families. In the face of her absorption in the gentle sentimental Christmas ceremonies of her country, with their lametta-hung Christmas trees, their elusive Christ-child placing presents beneath them, their family choirs singing 'Silent Night', always with a proud eye on the obscure Austrian schoolmaster who had miraculously composed it, Rodney felt slightly ashamed of the hearty English Christmases he had spent in his childhood, with their unpoetic devices of stockings and turkeys.

'Yes, let's do that,' he said, and thought with relief that he would in that way be able to keep Johanna separate from his fellow-soldiers, who would by the evening be well aglow in the hotel guest-room, in one corner of which the unit handyman had fastened a large fir-tree and draped it profusely with coloured electric bulbs. They had exchanged no opinion on the tree, yet instinctively Rodney felt that its gaudiness must offend her. However, a doubt of a different kind presented itself. 'I should enjoy it,' he said, 'but would you?'

'I wish to do it,' she said with a grateful glance to show that she had understood his inference. He had been thinking of former Christmases she had spent with her German husband, who had been killed a year ago, and of their child, who had caught a cold in a shelter in Vienna a few months before that and died, an indirect victim of the air raids. It was a matter of which they found it best not to speak, for it stirred in them the bitter memory of a senseless hostility. It was useless to argue that he himself had been in no way responsible for the destruction of her family, just as she had been in no way responsible for the terrible slaughter in the mountain pass which he was helping to investigate. They were neither of them directly responsible for these crimes, yet the guilt of both hung between them, threatening the development of their love.

It was a problem past which they had as yet found no way. Both

knew, though they did not speak of it, that it must be overcome. In Johanna's wish to share with him, in the street, her Christmas as well as, in the hotel, his own, he felt her intuition groping out towards this problem. He said nothing further, not wanting to spoil the significance of their evening walk by defining in advance its purpose. In companionable silence they walked back to the hotel.

It was very dark and a thin powdery snow had begun to fall. Pausing on the hotel step Johanna tied under her chin the ribbons of a pointed fur cap and hunched her shoulders in the fur-lined jacket which Rodney had filched for her from a German army store. 'What lovely air after all that smoke,' she said, breathing deeply.

The village street was now a black stripe between yellow squares of windows. The church had also disappeared into the blackness, but the Madonna against its wall glowed in the amber light of electric bulbs, the painted wooden face staring calmly into the darkness. He was not religious, yet a feeling of well-being filled Rodney at the sight of her. 'How peaceful she looks,' he said.

Johanna glanced at the figure as they passed by, but did not pause. 'The lights are terrible,' she said. 'Modern lighting does not go well with such ancient symbols. It is like the lights on your Christmas tree.'

'There's no harm in moving with the times, surely?' he asked mildly. 'Besides, it isn't my tree.'

She squeezed his hand. 'I know,' she said softly. 'You would not do it like that.'

He did not respond completely to her gesture, though he returned it. He felt within him a faint protest against her criticism of his fellows, whose guest she was and whose dinner she had just eaten. 'They did it the way they know it,' he said. 'It means something to them, you know.'

She did not reply, but he felt that she doubted his assertion, yet did not want to destroy his own belief in it. It may have been meant kindly or it may indeed have been a real inability to project herself into the feelings of others, to comprehend an outlook other than her own. It was something he had noticed before in her countrymen, complete blindness to the fact that other persons possessed feelings as complicated and as sensitive as their own. Often he had been horrified when questioning persons who had taken part in the persecution of the Jewish column to hear their calm descriptions of shootings and beatings and the beastly details of mass burials. Small mild men, they were all quick to insist that they had done no more than obey the orders of their superiors. The phrase '*Dann hat's geheissen*'

A WALK IN THE SNOW

('We were told') was the refrain of all their statements, and it may very well have been true. When he asked them, 'Didn't you feel it was a terrible thing to do?' they all agreed with him politely, but it seemed to him completely without shame.

It must have been an evening such as this on which the mile-long column of Jews was herded over the pass, except that the snow had been thicker on the ground, the cold more intense. He imagined them shuffling along in the snow in their rags, some of them with bare feet, struggling blindly through the pretty postcard scenery, beneath the pine branches holding their inch-deep layers of snow and the stars crackling like sparks between them. And behind the curtained windows by which he was now walking with Johanna sat perhaps some of the very men who in their black uniforms had moved among the suffering people, beating and shooting because they had been told, but not surely without a certain furtive pleasure? Now in privacy they sat among their happy white-haired children looking into the glow of a Christmas tree along the branches of which cotton wool snow lay as lightly as the horrors of that former night on their consciences.

In a sudden impulse of loathing against them Rodney withdrew his arm from Johanna. She looked at him in surprise. He pulled himself together and dug in his pocket for a handkerchief, making that the reason of his withdrawal from her. After all, she had not taken part in that terrible event, she had not even known about it. He must not vent his disgust on her. 'It's all very quiet,' he said. 'I haven't seen any Christmas trees yet.'

'No, it is disappointing. I think perhaps we are here a little too early.'

'The curtains are drawn. I don't think we should see anything anyway.'

'That is unusual,' she agreed. 'But singing we should hear.'

'Perhaps nobody is celebrating this year.'

'I think they would celebrate whatever happens, though it is true they have little to celebrate with this year, poor things.'

Poor things! Poor because they had no *Schnapps* to warm their frigid hearts, no dolls and teddy bears from the *Christkind* to persuade themselves through their children's grateful eyes that they were kind and good! 'I don't wonder they have hidden themselves behind the curtains,' he said roughly. 'How many of them do you think said "Poor things" when they were beating up the Jews?'

She gasped and looked at him with shocked eyes before bowing her head. He took her arm and said quickly, 'Come on, let's get back.' Side by side they returned the way they had come, looking straight

before them. He could feel her body trembling against his arm and knew that she was struggling against tears. He had not meant her to take his remark personally, but he felt no tenderness towards her. By refusing to admit that her countrymen had behaved outrageously she condoned and identified herself with them. 'Why upset yourself on their account?' he asked. 'You know they don't deserve it.'

'I've asked you not to talk of that,' she said shakily. 'Why must you spoil our walk?'

'I couldn't help it. Maybe I can't shut out realities as easily as you.'

'Rodney.'

He had wounded her again. He saw how completely out of sympathy he was with her and decided to keep silent. She was living in a dream world of her own, full of sweetness and sentimentality. What she could not cram into it must be rigorously excluded, even the sins of her own kind. She would hear no evil. Yet he felt that her eyes looked out on the surrounding darkness not with the calm confidence of the painted Madonna on the church wall but with the blind stare of the windows lining the street, guarding their pretty Christmas trees and singing children against the horrors of the night.

As they neared the hotel they heard the English soldiers, their lungs cheerfully warmed with the fumes of alcohol, bellowing out 'The First Nowell'. As he opened the door to the dark hall their voices came out in a roar, mixed with stale warm air and tobacco smoke. He felt on his arm Johanna's impulsive movement of withdrawal, but he ignored it and pulled her with him into the hall. The door to the guest-room was open and through it they could see the huge Christmas tree, garishly outlined by the red, blue, green and yellow lights clustered thickly on its boughs. Around it the men lay back in their chairs, their uniform jackets open, cigarettes and glasses in their hands. Between them sat the women, listening with smiling faces to the unfamiliar carol. When it came to an end they burst out into laughing appreciation. The room was suddenly a hub-bub of conversation.

One of the men caught sight of Rodney and Johanna standing in the dark hall and disengaged an arm from the shoulder of his companion to wave to them. 'Where have you been?' he shouted cheerfully. 'Come on in. Time for other things later.'

Rodney looked at Johanna, inviting her answer. She was gazing at the garish Christmas tree with an expression of horror on her face. 'Let's go in,' he said, concealing his impatience with her. 'You'll get used to it.'

She hesitated. His anger rising, he waited in silence, prepared if necessary to go in alone. They were after all good fellows, his

friends. Then some of the women began softly to sing 'Silent Night'. The conversation died at once and the men one by one joined in the singing.

Rodney saw Johanna cover her eyes suddenly with her hands and heard her muttered '*Mein Gott*'. She stumbled and put out a hand to the banisters to steady herself. Her face, twisted in suffering, was illuminated fleetingly in the glare of the tree. Shocked, he closed the door, cutting off the light. They stood then in the darkness while the sentimental voices, dimmed behind the shut door, dragged on their song. No longer able to see her, he waited in agony for her to say what he had already seen in her face: 'Are these our liberators? Are these the people who have come to show us the error of our ways, to impose on us their standards, their outlook? Was it for this that my husband and child had to die?'

If she said it aloud, as he himself had proclaimed his own disgust with her people, they would then be committed, the contact they had established utterly destroyed. In the darkness he groped his way towards her. 'Johanna,' he said appealingly.

She flung her arms about him. He pulled her head in to his shoulder and held her tight. She began to weep.

'They didn't mean it that way,' he said softly. 'You mustn't take it so to heart.'

'If it had been anything but that.'

'But we sing it at home, too.' He might have added that it was the women, some of them from her own country, who had begun it, but he no longer had the wish to put himself in the right. He recognized all too clearly the mistake they had made. They could not so simply force themselves past the ghosts of all the dead who lay between them. Standing holding her in the darkness, he knew that their only chance was to push their feelings back to the strict limits of the personal, to draw the blinds against the cruelties and insensitivities of their fellow men. Now, awaiting her outburst, he passionately regretted his own.

The song came to an end, but still she said nothing. He pressed her to him and then released her quickly, fearing that somebody might come from the room and add to their distress by misinterpreting their embrace. She took out a handkerchief and wiped the tears quickly from her face. 'You'd better go upstairs,' he suggested, relieved that she too had seen the way past their danger.

She took his hand. 'No,' she said resolutely, 'we are going in there.' She herself opened the door to the guest-room, and he had time only to press her arm in gratitude before the lights of the Christmas tree illumined them, standing hand in hand at its side.

RICHARD EBERHART

On A Squirrel

Crossing the Road in Autumn, in New England



It is what he does not know,
Crossing the road under the elm trees,
About the mechanism of my car,
About the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
About Mozart, India, Arcturus,

That wins my praise. I engage
At once in whirling squirrel-praise.

He obeys the orders of nature
Without knowing them.
It is what he does not know
That makes him beautiful.
Such a knot of little purposeful nature!

I who can see him as he cannot see himself
Repose in the ignorance that is his blessing.

It is what man does not know of God
Composes the visible poem of the world.

. . . Just missed him!

JEAN FERRY

Kafka or 'The Secret Society'

Translated from the French by Jean Stewart



Joseph K . . . , when he was about twenty years old, discovered the existence of a secret society. Actually, it is quite unlike any other society of this sort. It is very hard for some people to gain admittance to it. Many will never succeed in doing so, although they long to passionately. Others, on the contrary, are members without being aware of the fact. Indeed one can never be quite sure of belonging to it; many people believe themselves to be members of this secret society, whereas they are not really members at all. Although they have been initiated, they are farther from belonging to it than many men who do not even know of its existence. As a matter of fact they have undergone the ordeals of a false initiation intended to mislead those who are unworthy of being really initiated. But even the most authentic members, those who have reached the highest rank in the hierarchy of this society, are never told whether their successive initiations are valid or not. A member may even have attained a certain genuine rank in the normal way, after a series of authentic initiations, and then without being warned he may have been subjected only to false initiations. Endless discussions take place between the members as to whether it is better to be admitted to a humble but genuine rank or to occupy an exalted but illusory position. In any case, nobody can rely on the validity of his rank.

In fact, the situation is even more complicated, because certain candidates are admitted to the highest ranks without having undergone any test, and others without even having been informed. And indeed it is not even necessary to apply for admission; some people have undergone an advanced initiation who were ignorant of the very existence of the secret society.

The powers of the higher members are unlimited, and they carry within themselves a potent emanation of the secret society. By their

JEAN FERRY

mere presence, even if they make no show of it, they can transform some anodyne gathering like a concert or an anniversary dinner into a meeting of the secret society. These members are obliged to make secret reports on all the meetings which they have attended, and these reports are examined by other members of the same rank; there is thus a continual interchange of reports between the members, which allows the supreme authorities of the secret society to keep the situation well in hand.

Even the highest and most extensive initiation never goes so far as to reveal to the initiate the purpose of the secret society. But there are always traitors, and for a long time now everybody has been aware that this purpose is to keep the secret.

Joseph K . . . was terrified to learn that this secret society was so powerful, so widely ramified, that he might perhaps shake hands, without realizing it, with the most powerful member of it. But unfortunately one morning, after a night of uneasy sleep, he lost his first-class ticket in the metro. This mishap was the first link in a chain of confused and contradictory circumstances which brought him into contact with the secret society. Later, in self-defence, he was forced to take the necessary steps to gain admission into this redoubtable organization. All this happened a long time ago, and the success of his endeavours is still unknown.



Marjorie Craig: Boats at Hammersmith

J. C. HALL

Perchance



Because some mischievous boys
Turned round a post
A traveller lost his way —
Or, rather, lost
The place he meant to find
And found instead
A strange but happier home,
A warmer bed.

Now in his marvellous luck
He quite forgets
How in the rightful place
She frets and frets —
She whom an urchin chance
Unhusbanded:
Familiar fireless room
And empty bed.

Letter from Florence



There can be few villages in Italy more composed and reticent than this little cluster of houses crowning the olive and cypress muffled hill of Bellosguardo, the 'beautiful view' from which Galileo once studied the movement of the stars and the Brownings found it hard,

Gazing upon the earth and heavens, to make
A choice of beauty.

The marvellous view of Florence is unchanged, but now, at the foot of the hill, Vespas roar by, old women in black rasp the quick, witty talk of the Florentine poor, young men with initialled shirts—wearing their whole wealth on their person—stand at the corner café discussing the gas strike, while across the road boys play football with Arsenal agility on the broken surface of the Piazza Torquato Tasso. But begin the serpentine climb up the hill between the high Tuscan walls loading the air with the voluptuous scent of jessamine, and in a moment you are beyond the boundaries of Florence itself, among the *poderi* and the stern villas that have stood for centuries above the city, detached and remote from its life. To such a slope as Bellosguardo Boccaccio took the seven ladies of the *Decameron* while the plague raged below, and there all lost their thoughts of death and disease.

I am writing this letter in the Villa Mercedes which rambles down most of one side of the piazza of Bellosguardo and is as beautifully austere as only the Florentine quattrocento could be. It is easy enough to imagine Cosimo de' Medici talking neo-Platonism in this high-vaulted room or even a revengeful murder or two having stained its floors, but it is the ghost of someone who existed only in fiction that most haunts me here. Henry James often stayed at the villa, the guest of the mother of its present owner, Mrs Huntington, and in *The Portrait of a Lady* he made it the setting for Gilbert Osmond's ensnarement of the noble Isabel Archer, and in this room I imagine him

plotting with Madame Merle for her moral destruction. Most of the furniture and pictures in this long *salone* are as they were in James's day and his description of it is recognizable at once: 'The room was, however, less sombre than our indications may have represented, for it had a wide, high door, which now stood open into the tangled garden behind; and the tall iron lattices admitted on occasion more than enough of the Italian sunshine. It was, moreover, a seat of ease, indeed of luxury, telling of arrangements subtly studied and refinements frankly proclaimed.' And how well he symbolized the reticent mood of Bellosguardo when, in writing of the outside of the villa, he spoke of 'this antique, solid, weatherworn, yet imposing front has a somewhat incommunicative character . . . (its windows) seemed less to offer communication with the world than to defy the world to look in'. One detail gives me a special pleasure; the great iron gate which leads into the courtyard still groans heavily as you open it, a point noted by Isabel Archer on one of her visits to Osmond.

The villagers of Bellosguardo are as reticent as the Villa Mercedes, a rural antithesis to the quick-witted race which begins at the foot of the hill. They are shy in their kindness, giving the impression that they are a little afraid of those they don't know—and fear of strangers is certainly no characteristic of the confident Florentines who have never bothered to 'examine themselves and see true' in the way Dante admonished them to do at the end of Canto VI of the *Purgatorio*. On Bellosguardo, as on all the Florentine slopes, villas that once bore the names of their English or American *padroni* have returned to Italian ownership, and that once fascinating, closely-bound organism, the Anglo-American colony, bravely awaits its final decomposition. Pockets of resistance remain; an American woman living here, on being told by a friend about the domestic problems in England, exclaimed, 'My dear, you can't tell *me* anything about that. Nowadays I have to make do with *Italian* servants and I have to have my truffles flown over from France.' At I Tatti, Mr Berenson's villa near Settignano, there is a dynamo activity, both social and intellectual, which seems to be almost an apotheosis of the 'life enhancement' once pursued so carefully by the colony in its great days. During the summer Mr Berenson has been writing a fortnightly article for the *Corriere della Sera* as well as continuing work on his great 'List' of Italian painting. 'I have enough work to occupy me till I am a hundred and fifty', he says, his eyes twinkling in such a way that you feel the sixty-one years will be given him, that children yet unborn will, as young men, be listening to his fluting voice cutting through cant to truth and answering his searching questions about all they are thinking and doing and feeling. Still he will be

walking to his favourite tree on the cypress ridge towards Vincigliata to touch its surfaces and find the tactile pleasure he has demanded from all works of art. And by then, who knows, he may even have discovered a tiny portion of merit in the art of our time.

It is one of the paradoxes of Italian politics that Tuscany, where the peasants are better off than in any other part of Italy, should be so strongly Communist. In Florence itself the Party was in power until two years ago and, ironically enough, many Right-wing Florentines speak almost with affection of Fabiani, the former Communist mayor whose rule was so temperate compared with that of the present Christian Democrat mayor, La Pira, of whom I have heard it said that he is a saint, a menace, a Communist in disguise, a great Christian, a destroyer of the rich, an inciter of strikes, a hopelessly incompetent idealist, and one of the great figures of modern Italy. La Pira is a small, smiling, bespectacled man, a former teacher of Roman law who, until he replaced Fabiani, lived the life of a monk in the monastery of San Marco—Savonarola was a brother of the monastery and La Pira has much of his fanaticism. He still lives a severely monastic life, sleeps on boards, has no money of his own and holds masses for the poor at the church of the Badia. It is said that he once took off his shoes in the street and gave them to a beggar who was in need, and his critics wish he would restrict himself to charity on this scale instead of spending very large sums of taxpayers' money on empirical philanthropic schemes of his own devising. It was characteristic of him that when a communist-led strike in Florence brought hardship to thousands of families he should use two million lire from the Commune treasury on feeding the strikers and their dependants. He has recently taken the Commune further towards bankruptcy by organizing a World Congress of Christian Peace and Civilization, inviting delegates from all over the world to Florence as the Commune's guests. His impracticable idealism makes many people feel that he should be put under some form of control and there has recently been a Machiavellian movement in the Commune to restrict his power. All La Pira's actions are clearly based on a literal devotion to the teachings of Christ, and in carrying out those teachings he is fearless in risking imputations of Communist sympathies. During the traditional September junketing of the Communist Party he caused one of the biggest rumpuses of his career by refusing not to allow the Communists to take over the Cascine park for a few days of *fiesta*. It will be extremely interesting to follow the career of La Pira; such men as he may well be, in the end, the answer to the problem of Italy's Communism.

Although the Florentine treasury is embarrassed the Maggio Musi-

LETTER FROM FLORENCE

cale, helped by an injection of federal money, again staggered into being this year, though its pulse was weaker than ever. The grumbles against the 'Maggio' were general and its director, Maestro Siciliani, is given little thanks for his courageous policy of staging little-known operas which have frequently turned out to be a revelation. Italians, where opera is concerned, are the most conservative people in the world, and would like the 'Maggio' to be much less arcane. This year they had imposed on them Spontini's grandiloquent *Agnese di Hohenstaufen*, Tchaikowsky's *Mazeppa* and *Euryanthe*. The productions were good without being remarkable, but even so the Teatro Comunale could only be filled on the first nights by a liberal handing out of free tickets—for later performances the house was often half empty. During the interval at the first night of *Mazeppa* a man in the balcony caught sight of a friend in the concourse of elegance below, and called out 'Why don't you pay the difference and come up and join us.' *Mazeppa* was, for me, the excitement of the 'Maggio', as rough and 'Russian' as Moussorgsky, far from the delicacies of *Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades*. Boris Cristoff, in his long prison scene, gave a performance as fine as I have ever heard in opera.

In June Florence celebrated the fifth centenary of the birth of its son, Amerigo Vespucci, with a '*suono e luce*' after the manner of the Versailles *son et lumière*. Torches fluttered in ranks along the machicolations of the Palazzo Vecchio and floodlights played in various colours over its gnarled old surface while recorded voices told the story of Amerigo's voyages to the New World. The lighting of the building was in its way an exquisite work of art. If one accepts, as painters accept, that the nature of light on a landscape is almost as important as the landscape itself, then this artifice of light on great monuments of architecture needs no justification. That night each subtle change of light on the Palazzo Vecchio seemed to draw out another facet of its character.

A week or two later the Piazza della Signoria was again alight for that bloodiest of football games, the 'Calcio in Costume', which is played by Florentine toughs in mediaeval costumes to pitilessly mediaeval rules—if rules can be said to have anything to do with this apparently complete negation of discipline. As at the Siena Palio, no holds are barred, anything is permitted in order to get at the ball. Two pairs of polychromatic breeches were lost this year, blood dripped on to the specially laid earth, and at one point two private fights took place simultaneously some hundred yards from the ball. The 'Calcio in Costume' celebrates the Florentine garrison's Drake-like disregard for an approaching Pisan army during the fifteenth

century; the soldiers finished their game of football before going out to fight.

This year's exhibition at the Strozzi Palace was of extreme and special interest. Works by the four great masters of the early Renaissance—Uccello, Piero della Francesca, Domenico Veneziano and Andrea del Castagno—were drawn from private and public collections. The great series of frescoes which Castagno did for the Refectory of S. Apollonia were on view for the first time since their cleaning, emerging with brilliant freshness. It must have been a revelation even to those who knew these four closely-linked figures intimately as individual painters to be able to turn from the Venetian luminosity of Domenico's 'Madonna and Saints' to the wonderful treatment of the same subject by his pupil, Piero, and to see the equivalent of the later, dramatic Domenico in the hard but emotional style of Castagno. Although the villagers of Monterchi had refused to be without their Piero of the 'Madonna del Parto' for the summer Urbino lent her 'Flagellation' and Borgo San Sepolcro her great polyptych. It was pointed out to me that the figures of the flagellants in the 'Flagellation' had been scratched at one time by fanatic nails. The cleaning and renovating of the Florence cathedral made it possible for the exhibition to show the three wonderful rose windows by Castagno and Uccello which for centuries have stood, inaccessible, on the cupola of the cathedral. A great exhibition.

And there, then, is the Florentine summer, faithful to a pattern that varies little from year to year. In spite of its Communism Florence, so the rest of Italy agrees, has a conservative soul, clinging to the older social customs, raising its hands whenever the conventions are disobeyed. Unmarried girls are always chaperoned and the post-war emancipation of Roman girls has only just begun to be felt at all in Florence. This provincial respectability is so much part of the charm of the place, something one tends on occasions to smile at but which I hope it will never lose.

J. M. COCKING

Proust and Combray



In *Le Temps retrouvé*, Proust complains that the critics who read the first part of his book spoke of his microscopic scrutiny of his mind 'whereas I had, on the contrary, used a telescope to descry things which were indeed very small, but because of their great distance, and each of which was a world'. Marcel, looking backwards, sees a succession of different selves, and each of them inhabiting his own world, with its own particular atmosphere and key-sensations; the word itself connects with the famous sentence of the introduction: 'a sleeping man has round him in a circle the succession of hours, the order of years and worlds'. The epoch when he first explored the Faubourg St Germain was one of these worlds; Balbec was another; the Champs-Élysées and Gilberte's home was another. The most self-contained, the brightest, the sun from which all other worlds borrowed some degree of reflected light was Combray. Whenever Marcel looks for the origin of those values, attitudes and expectations which set the course of his life and determine the measure of his happiness, it is to Combray that he must return; and when he comes to present his past in the radiance of involuntary memory, it is round Combray that the halo shines most convincingly.

Combray, with its two ways, was artificially constructed out of the significant features of Proust's childhood. Into it went memories of his life in Paris itself, at his uncle's house at Auteuil and at his Aunt Amyot's house at Illiers. Illiers played by far the largest part. P.-L. Larcher, in *Le Parfum de Combray*, shows just how much (and how little) the actual topography of Illiers contributed to Proust's reconstruction; the rest was invented by Proust to correspond with what he remembered of his imaginative life and with the pattern of this as he ordered and completed it in transforming his own past into Marcel's. According to Léon Pierre-Quint, Proust could never spend his summer holidays in the country after his first bad attack of

asthma at the age of nine, and went instead to the coast. But memories of sea, coast and seaside resorts were reserved for the second 'world' of natural impressions, Balbec, which was to show the second of the two most creative phases in Marcel's spiritual history. Into the stylized topography and partly imagined family and inhabitants of Combray, Proust packed all his childhood memories, up to early adolescence, which in retrospect appeared to be connected with his moral failure and artistic success. The year is limited to late spring, summer and early autumn. Marcel's is a life of freedom from school and social contacts with people of his own age. The surroundings which reflect and stimulate his imagination are natural instead of urban. Leisure, independence and solitude limit the story of his growth to the story of the use he made of the freedom of his imagination.

People are part of the child's background. Proust had a brother, Robert; Marcel had none. He is dispensed from the frictions and adjustments which Proust had known. Elisabeth de Gramont wrote of the division of Proust's family into two clans—Marcel and his mother, sensitive and easily moved, Robert and his father, sane, stable, conventional and impatient of the hyperaesthesia of the others. In *Jean Santeuil* there is no brother, but there are distractingly normal cousins, from whom Jean Santeuil has to shut himself away in a manner which, to the unsympathetic reader, might appear frowsty and perhaps disagreeably unsociable; in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, the room with drawn blinds or the deep hooded chair in the garden are part of the idealized and dreamlike privacy of Marcel's natural solitude, accepted and savoured in isolation from the world of social obligations. Most of the people who live close to Marcel are two generations away in time—the grandmother and her two sisters, Céline and Flora, the grandfather, his brother Adolphe (soon cut off from the family by his supposed indiscretion in introducing Marcel to his flighty mistress, Swann's future wife Odette de Crécy) and his cousin, Marcel's great-aunt, who owns the Combray house. The others are a generation away—his parents and Aunt Léonie, great-aunt's daughter, who becomes a permanent invalid from the time when her husband, Uncle Octave dies.

If, to the child, these people are part of his background, the moral forces with which he has to reckon and from which he draws his first impressions of the world of adult responsibilities and relationships, to Proust they are puppets in the human comedy. They share with the dreamlike quality of a world supposedly recovered by involuntary memory the shadowy yet over-rigid, inconsequential yet over-typical character of their words and habits; they are not quite

in tune—the grandmother particularly—with the moral exigencies and ideals which for the child they represent. For they and the whole of the Combray episode are seen with the double vision which, in one form or another, is characteristic of Proust. One form of the double vision here is that the child's divinities are felt by the child as divinities and seen and appraised by the grown man as equals (or, subtly, inferiors); another is that Proust, always capable of seeing his own character sympathetically from the inside and critically from the outside, condemning his vices while he was frustrated as a writer but more inclined to rationalize them when successfully writing because he saw the interconnection between his weakness and his genius, tended to reserve for Marcel all of himself that could be idealized and connected with genius and to project into other characters, sometimes recommended for tolerance and sympathy but sometimes mocked, gently or cruelly, the comic or more obviously morbid or vicious sides of himself. And so illness and solitude, in so far as they mean sensitiveness, contemplation and reflection, are given to Marcel; in so far as they stand for hypochondria, self-indulgence and the shelving of responsibility they are indulgently caricatured in Tante Léonie, 'perpetually lying in a vague state of sorrow, physical weakness, illness, obsession and devotion'—Tante Léonie to whom Marcel, in *La Prisonnière*, finds himself growing closer in temperament and habits as his illness increases its hold upon his life.

If, for Proust, these adult characters are the butts of his indulgent humour, the childish perspective of them which he attributes to the young Marcel is dominated by three impressions; the love and solicitude of his grandmother and his mother, their moral rectitude and even, in his grandmother, idealism, together with the guilty sense of how far he falls short of the standards they propose, and the gratuitous cruelty which these grown-ups sometimes show each other. Céline and Flora bate their sister by offering her husband forbidden brandy and calling her to see him drink; Françoise is as brutal to the pregnant kitchenmaid as she is to the chicken she enjoys killing. Happiness and security depend on the affection of his mother and grandmother; and the symbol of this too-close dependence on maternal protectiveness is the good-night kiss of which he is deprived on the evenings when Swann comes to dine. There comes an evening, no doubt real enough in Proust's life, for it begins *Jean Santeuil* and figures again in the draft published by *La Table Ronde*, when the child must at all cost have his good-night kiss. Since the greatest suffering of an otherwise secure and happy life is the nightly separation from his mother, the ideal is to force the issue and de-

mand the viaticum. Which he does; only to discover that he has ruined for himself another ideal by failing to control one of those nervous impulses which those who must care for him see as the most pressing danger to his moral life and future happiness. The child takes what solace he can from the notion that his defection comes more from his nerves than himself, but cannot rid himself of the guilt of disappointing his mother. Calm, escape from guilt and quiet enjoyment of his mother's presence come only when George Sand's *François le Champi* has put a veil of lively if, to the child who only partly follows the story, obscure patterns of imagination between reality and himself. This is Marcel's first contact with romantic literature; the incident of the good-night kiss is the first instance of the escape from reality into imagination which is the direction of art, the direction of life being, in general, the fall from imagination into the desert of reality. The anguish of the child, moreover, is connected by Proust with the anguish which for Swann, and an older Marcel, is an essential part of the experience of love.

Proust, since he paid so much attention to this incident, seems to have remembered it more readily and vividly than any other part of his childhood. It is a perfect introduction to the temperamental qualities of the narrator, and it is magnificently dramatic writing. What might, in cold blood, appear a molehill makes a most convincing mountain; and the moral dilemma it symbolizes must indeed have been crucial for Proust himself. Over-sensitive and suffering children have lately infested literature, but impatience can hardly project itself back on to Proust. Whatever may now seem banal in the situation is redeemed by many things. The obvious artistic sincerity which marks successful communication of feeling without sentimental comment; the distance which the narrator puts between the experience and his present self, the cool detachment with which, paradoxically, the drama is conveyed—another aspect of that duality which is characteristic of Proust's attitude to his material; the emotional subtlety of the presentation, assuming guilt, yet forcing sympathy and the reader's connivance—Baudelaire's *hypocrite lecteur* less brutally and more insidiously proposed; above all, perhaps, the sense of revelation of intimate mysteries which has been built up by the introduction. This crux of Proust's moral failure, this epitome of the moral drama diluted in the narratives of *Les Plaisirs et les Jours*, is bathed now in a serenity reflected from Proust's sense of his achievement of *l'adoration perpétuelle*. He has won his battle on ground of his own choosing.

In *Le Temps retrouvé*, Proust wrote that the deeper the artist has to plunge within himself to recover the impressions to be recorded,

the denser will be the poetic atmosphere with which they are surrounded. It is in his introduction, leading into the world of Combray, that Proust makes artistic use of the mystery, effort and final sense of reward which attend the recovery of past impressions. At the outset, we wait outside the Ali Baba's cave of the unconscious. Humblot, the manager of the publishing-house of Ollendorff, waited impatiently, unable to understand, he reported, why a man need take thirty pages to describe his tossings and turnings on the verge of sleep. The more patient reader, catching the rumour of intriguing doings within, is given glimpses of the range of partial consciousness from civilization to brutishness and back, mentions of the riches which, later, he is to possess—Combray, Balbec, Paris, Doncières, Venice—then a full view of one moment of the Combray ritual, the incident of the good-night kiss. After the mounting tension and release of the child's anguish, the assault on the door of Marcel's past begins again; Marcel, at some undefined moment in middle life, tastes the madeleine soaked in tea, and slowly the door moves, to open wide at last on the vision of Combray seen from the approaching train, with the church in the foreground.

The atmosphere of apocalypse generated by the superb narrative of the madeleine incident and the introduction surrounds the whole of the Combray episode. The imperfect tense lifts even specific and apparently singular happenings out of the world of temporal succession; events and scraps of conversation are reported in this tense of habit and extension, of actions and feelings which are never thought of as ending in a recordable achievement; which, as parts of life, are irremediably lost but, recovered in words, are the significant extensions and dimensions of the past's substance. 'I confess', wrote Proust, 'that a certain use of the imperfect—that cruel tense which shows us life as at once ephemeral and passive, which, at the very moment when it retraces our actions, marks them as illusions, annihilates them in the past without leaving us, as the perfect tense does, the consolation of activity—is always, for me, a source of mysterious moods of sadness.' Many events are thrust back into the pluperfect; seen, that is, not as part of the succession of a moving life, but as subsisting only in their effects, in their lasting contribution to the tensions and assumptions which are part of Marcel's background.

The anguish of bedtime is the first sign of the serpent in Marcel's Eden, the first instance of the way in which events refuse to adapt themselves to wishes. There are other foreshadowings of a future to be lived in a fallen world, yet Combray is stability and security, with its limitations offset by the freedom of a vivid and lively imagination

nourished on books and not yet aware that its failure to be self-sufficient promises disillusion. At this stage we are given the delight in the illusions themselves, the promises later to be betrayed.

Stability, security, tradition, habit, all these are summed up in the church solidly and comfortably ensconced in time, a visible and permanent past. The church is the first part of Combray to be seen, after Marcel's bedroom, and if we leave it to meet Aunt Léonie drinking her lime-flower tea we soon return to explore its detail. For it is a symbol of what the novel sets out to be; in *Le Temps retrouvé*, at the very end of the book, it reappears: 'This dimension of Time, of which I had had a presentiment in Combray church, I would try to make continually perceptible in a transcription of the world which would have to be very different from that provided by our misleading senses.' For Proust the only essence is that of destiny completed, the only contemplation of essence is the contemplation of the essence of a completed past. In *Le Temps retrouvé* his white-haired and wrinkled characters have achieved a kind of grandeur by achieving a past, their only real dimension. Combray church and Balbec church, symbols of Amiens and all the mediaeval churches to the significance of whose iconography Proust had been awakened by Ruskin and Mâle are, like Proust's novel, means of renewing in contemplation a lost spiritual vigour.

The past is solidity; it is also romance. Every symbol of the past is a window for the imagination on to the glamour of legend. The ancient porch of the church gives access not only to the fingerworn holy-water stoup, the tomb covering the noble dust of the abbots of Combray and the peacock-colours of the windows, but, by suggestion, to a grotto hung with stalactites, a valley visited by fairies and the mystery of a Merovingian darkness. Stimulating to the imagination, yet static, familiar and unthreatening; offering the rich essence of time with none of time's menace of change, the church has the degree of its past extension marked in the varieties of its architecture and ornament, reflecting the preoccupations, tastes and spiritual qualities of many periods. And its steeple is the symbol of a world clear of Proust's oppressive sense of guilt, the centre of the *vertus de Combray*; they, the steeple and Marcel's grandmother are grouped together in Marcel's memory.

It is the privilege of childhood to combine routine and freedom, security and imaginative adventure; Marcel is so morbidly dependent on the familiar that he is a little afraid even of the freedom and adventure of imagination. The magic lantern which covers the walls of the bedroom where he suffers the prospect of the nightly separation from his mother with coloured pictures of Geneviève de Brab-

ant's castle and Golo on horseback 'filled with dreadful purpose' is an intimation of supernatural mystery and beauty, but also an uncomfortable intrusion into the world of comfortable habit. There are, in the last event, only two ways in which Marcel can adjust imagination and reality; by dulling imagination through habit, or by escaping from reality into books. Habit is the drug which deadens the pain experienced by the imaginative self in a hostile reality.

But imagination is not to be denied; and between habit and art there lie the alternately ecstatic and dispiriting rhythms of illusion and disillusion. In the Combray episode, almost the whole of the child's world is caught up on the tide of poetry, as the doorknob and all the natural irregularities in the walls of Marcel's room are caught up out of their material function by the light of the magic lantern and absorbed into the 'supernatural essence' of Golo and his horse; this complex of the sensuous pleasure of colour, historical exoticism and the emotions connected with Golo's vaguely ominous descent on Geneviève's castle is one of the determinants of Marcel's imaginative life; it connects directly and in all its elements with the suggestiveness of the stained glass windows in the church, and the double complex is the source of the poetry which marks the beginning of what Marcel, using one of Bergson's terms, calls the 'durée' of the name Guermantes in his own mind—for Oriane de Guermantes is a descendant of the historical Geneviève. Elements drawn from his later imagining as stimulated by books gravitate towards and crystallize round this double nucleus; and before this particular poetic world is thrown off its orbit by the first sight of Oriane in the flesh, he is already more than half in love with her as he has created her for himself.

In the draft of *La Table Ronde*, where the river Vivette, later to be the Vivonne, has already changed in character from the more realistic Loir of *Jean Santeuil* Proust confesses that what he looked for in the Guermantes way was the magic countryside suggested by books like *Le Lys dans la Vallée*. He looked, he said, in vain. Nature could not live up to the combined creativeness of Balzac's novel and Marcel's imagination. In *A la recherche du temps perdu*, the Guermantes way is made to the measure of the spiritual reality. In the draft, Proust wrote: 'In the characteristic colour assumed in memory by each separate year of my life, I cannot distinguish whether it was desire for the landscape which made me link a woman with it or whether it was love for the woman which made me desire the landscape'. In *A la recherche*, he refers often to that fusion of erethism with the sense of natural beauty which makes him long to possess the countryside physically in the person of a peasant-girl who sums

up her background in herself; but in the case of the imagined Oriane, where the notion of love is most rarefied, the poetry of the woman and of the 'way' with which she is associated has its earliest sources in colour, legend and books. Marcel's spiritual progress is from the Eden of reading to the fallen world of living and back to the paradise of a literature created, this time, by himself. It seems, moreover, that if the real Oriane de Guermantes was based on people like the Comtesse de Chevalign  and Mme Strauss, the Oriane of Marcel's imagination may have been a relative of Balzac's Mme de Mortsauf, perhaps also of Stendhal's Mme de R  nal; and that the faery beauty of the Guermantes way was created by Proust's imagination dwelling on memories not only of Illiers but of the landscapes he read of in books — the river-landscapes of *Le Lys*, of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, of *Mademoiselle de Maupin*. Proust's notebooks, as they have so far been reported on, do not provide, like Coleridge's, the clues needed to investigate such imaginative transmutations in detail; but comparison of all these landscapes shows suggestive correspondences which it would take too long to detail here, and leads to the conclusion that Proust finally created in his own words the magic which other men's words had suggested to him and which, even in his childish and willing eyes, the real landscapes had appeared to lack.

And this suggests a reason for the main differences between the landscapes of *A la recherche* and of *Jean Santeuil*. Jean's Etreuilles, like Marcel's Combray, is based on memories of Illiers — indeed sometimes Proust forgets himself and writes 'Illiers' instead of 'Etreuilles'. Etreuilles is, in fact, nearer the reality. Compared with Combray, Etreuilles is one-sided. The prosy river Loir is the forerunner of the Vivonne, but there is only one 'way'. There is a M  s  glise; there are long descriptions of hawthorn and apple-blossom; these flowers are already surrounded with significant emotional associations which Proust is exploring. But the hawthorns are not balanced by the water-lilies, and there is no question of the symbolic geography of the two ways. Of all the choice of explanations offered in *Le Temps retrouv  * for the transcendence of experience relived in memory, the most likely seems to be the freedom which memory leaves to the imagination to transpose the past as it will.

In *A la recherche*, too, the feeling of yearning after the past is kept within narrow bounds. It breaks through sometimes in a shaft of emotion which has gained in poignancy from its containment, as when Marcel suddenly leaps forward in time from the description of the Combray church to a moment when, in Paris, the sight of a spire recalls it, and he forgets the purpose for which he had asked a passer-by the way to stand dreaming at the view and the memory: 'and

no doubt then, and more anxiously than a moment ago when I asked for information, I am looking for the right way, turning down a street . . . but . . . that street is in my heart'; or when, at the end of the account of Combray, he speaks of its beauties as the foundation of his aesthetic life: 'When on summer evenings the resounding sky growls like a wild beast and everyone is depressed by the storm, it is to the Méséglise way that I owe the ecstasy I alone know of breathing, through the sound of falling rain, the perfume of invisible and everlasting lilacs.'

The poignancy here is felt by a reader who has just seen and smelled the lilacs and known their beauty in the terms Marcel proposes. The vision which in *Jean Santeuil* is merely hinted at is here created. In *Jean Santeuil* the sea which, remembered, is beatitude, is, as described, a less-than-ordinary sea. The reference to it is brief; the novelist is concerned with the disembodied emotion of the experience, ineffable and only to be hinted at in terms which are little more than the abstract signs of feeling. Etreuilles is described in detail, and the poetry of the hawthorns and lilacs of Combray is there in germ. But it is a daylight and unframed picture of Jean's early summers. The 'worlds' of *A la recherche* which are to correspond most closely with the evocations of unconscious memory, and which are also to be shown as the occasions and crystallizers of the narrator's awareness of his own poetry—Combray and Balbec—are created in sensuous terms and bathed in a dreamlike atmosphere which carries over something of the mystery of the introduction.

And with the satisfaction of creating an ideal world, the yearning passes into the background of Proust's mind. His imagination is no longer dispersing itself painfully into the void, but exercising itself to make good the gaps in the writer's present world. Not merely remembering, with whatever kind of memory, a past as it *really* was, in whatever sense of 'really', but shaping an ideal present in terms of the best of the past. At last Proust is not crying for the moon, but making his own, in his own—the artist's—way.

A la recherche, then, adds to the earlier Etreuilles the Guermantes way with its complex of associations—the magic lantern, the church windows, books—all concentrated into a magnetic attraction towards Oriane. It also develops and organizes the complex of associations centred on the Méséglise—later called Swann's—way. Books again—Bergotte's here, with ironic but significant overtones of *Phèdre*; the hawthorns of Tansonville; the magnetism of the image of Gilberte. The central image here is the hawthorns, which draw their power from an associative complex of their own. In *Jean Santeuil* their associations are lucidly probed and baldly stated; in *A*

la recherche merely suggested. But the early version confirms the importance of the suggestions and the deliberation with which they were worked into the pattern.

The hawthorns are white and pink; the order of impact in the main passage to which we must refer is: white hawthorn, pink hawthorn, Gilberte. Pink had a particular and particularly important emotional colour for Proust; *Jean Santeuil* shows how clearly he realized it and how curious he himself was to know why. In this early book pink is first singled out for attention in connection with the magic lantern. In *A la recherche* the magic lantern, appropriated to the Guermantes complex, has another colouring; Geneviève wears a blue sash, Golo is dressed in red; but the striking colour is yellow—the yellow of the *landes* and of Geneviève's castle—and yellow the name Guermantes will always be for Marcel. Yellow it naturally is, he further claims, playing in Symbolist fashion with the notion of fixed correspondences; but the private mental association is established by the magic lantern. In *Jean Santeuil*, the pink of the magic lantern is connected with the pink biscuits served after lunch at Etreuilles; it is the colour associated with things which the child thinks delicious and exciting to eat; it is eminently sensual.

It returns in *Jean Santeuil*, in the pink hawthorn. For Jean, as far back as he can remember, pink hawthorn is the epitome of spring and its beauty the symbol of spring's sensations and the focus of his earliest desire. He proposes a choice of explanations without himself choosing. Were they really more beautiful than others, these flowers, so delicate in structure and vivid in colour that they seemed made for festive occasions—were indeed massed on the altar for the festive Month of Mary? Was it the intellectual pleasure of comparing them with the white variety, the double with the single, and noting at once the analogies and the distinctions? Hardly this, since he had seen dog-roses before seeing roses proper and had felt no comparable delight in that case. Was it because the white and pink hawthorn reminded him of cream cheese plain and cream cheese flavoured and coloured with crushed strawberries? Was it because, when he was ill in bed, his mother had brought him branches of pink hawthorn which had to stand for the spring landscapes he could not go out to see?

This method of probing is familiar even in *A la recherche*, where it subsists chiefly in the analysis of psychological motive, all possible explanations being mooted but none finally and exclusively chosen. The associations of the hawthorn, however—and of all the intensely imagined passages on Combray—are dealt with differently. The private associations are brought in, but they are made to

bring with them a universal, perennial and sublimated spring. We are given, not the wherefores of the experience, but the experience itself, detached from the passing moments of its real possession and transformed into a climate and a place—into what Mallarmé would have called a *région où vivre*, a dwelling-place of the mind.

To trace the springs of the flood of feeling released by the main description of the hawthorns and transferred by Marcel to Gilberte we have to go back to the long passage on the pleasures of reading. Proust builds up the impression of an imagination which, stimulated by books, is confidently forward-looking and hopeful, turned towards a future vague, but compact of pleasures known, pleasures unknown and anticipated and pleasures and knowledge beyond what is already known or specifically imagined. 'My dreams of travel and love were only moments—which today I isolate artificially as if I were cutting sections at different heights in a fountain of water, rainbow-coloured and seemingly motionless—in an identical and inflexible upspringing of all the force of life within me.'

Almost immediately afterwards these pleasures of reading are attached to the name of Bergotte. What is particularly emphasized here is the notion of transcendence. In Bergotte, for the first time, transcendence is associated with style; for Marcel, as we shall see, has later to realize that transcendence can *only* be achieved in style. But, for the purpose we are now considering, Bergotte's name is firmly established as a password to the heaven of Marcel's imagining.

Bergotte has written on *Phèdre*. This is first mentioned quite casually, as one of the books and natural features of which Bergotte's style had 'revealed' the beauty to Marcel; but gradually, when Bergotte's name is mentioned, his pamphlet on Racine is brought into the foreground. One importance of this is in connection with the later development of the theme of Marcel's understanding of art; *Phèdre* is the chief rôle of La Berma, and after the pretentious nonsense talked about that actress by Norpois it is Bergotte who will reveal to Marcel the beauty of La Berma's acting. But *Phèdre* also provides overtones to Marcel's passion, first for Gilberte, then for Albertine.

Next, Bergotte's name is linked with Gilberte's; they go off together, as Marcel learns from Swann, to visit historic towns, cathedrals and castles which, for Marcel, add their romantic associations to the names of the two people. It is then that Marcel begins to fall in love with the unknown girl.

Soon afterwards the hawthorn theme is introduced; here they are white, and first seen on the church altar in celebration of the Month

of Mary. But the images worked into their detailed description bring in a series of associations ranging from the religious to the frankly sensual; the church, the holy mysteries, festivity and marriage, nature and the life-force; the grace, liveliness and coquetry of girls; then, specifically, and by a cunning transition, Vinteuil's daughter; Marcel tries to enter by empathy into the very sense of the movement of the stamens, and finds in this the toss of the head of a 'white, careless and sprightly girl (fille)'. The next sentence ostensibly changes the subject: 'M. Vinteuil had sat next to us with his daughter (fille)'. By the repeated word, Mlle Vinteuil is connected with the flowers, and after the short digression on Vinteuil's modesty and shyness, hawthorns and girl return. The flowers, as Marcel leaves the church, suddenly turn from sight to perfume, the bitter-sweet smell of almonds; Marcel's fancy locates this perfume in little spots on the flowers' surface which are whiter than the rest, associates it with the taste of almond paste and with Mlle Vinteuil's freckles, then with the imagined taste of Mlle Vinteuil's skin. From the holy mysteries we have run down a scale which ends in natural sensuality and the bite of instinct:

'For all the silence and stillness of the hawthorn, this intermittent ardour (of their perfume) was like the murmur of their intense life with which the altar buzzed like a hedgerow under the visitation of the living antennae of which the observer was reminded by certain stamens nearly red in colour which seemed to have kept the spring-time virulence, the irritant power, of insects now metamorphosed into flowers.'

Thus is established a scale of feeling on which Proust has learned to play at will, and the way is prepared for the main passage on the hawthorns and their association with Marcel's passion for Gilberte.

This passage is part of the section on the Méséglise way. From the beginning of the section, the impression is infused with sensuousness, with suggestions of the physically voluptuous; but this voluptuousness is idealized and caught up into the realm of poetry. Not, however, without a certain tension between the poetic and the physical, between the delight in the present sense of beauty and the pull of desire on the plane of instinct.

The first intimation of the essence of the Méséglise way is the smell of its lilacs. The leaves of the lilacs are hearts, but they are *les petits coeurs verts et frais*—little, green and all that *frais* suggests of youth, coolness and innocence. The flowers are exotic, oriental; they are minarets showing above the Gothic gable of the lodge; they are houris. But beside them the nymphs of a western spring would seem common—for the overtones of sensuality are immediately damped

and modified by the suggestion that these hours are not divinized flesh as much as the figures fixed in 'bright, pure colours' by Persian miniaturists. Yet, in Marcel, the impression ends in the desire to possess, to embrace the lilacs as if they were women.

The lilacs are nearly over; from them we pass to the hawthorns, by way of the less obviously but no less deeply erotic images of the flower-fringed pool, dominated by the 'lakeside sceptre' of the gladioli, its sleeping waters 'irritated' by insects which remind the observant reader consciously and the rapid reader unconsciously of the 'springtime virulence, the irritant power, of insects now metamorphosed into flowers' attributed earlier to the scent of the hawthorns in the church. When, immediately afterwards, the main hawthorn passage begins, Proust picks up all the associations established before—the church, holy mysteries, festivity, nature, the grace and liveliness of girls. But here the idea of the transcendence of their beauty is clearly brought out. The white hawthorns, which Marcel sees first, are connected with the church; with decorated altars, stained glass windows, the traceries of the rood-loft and the window-frames. In the next paragraph comes the suggestion of a transcendent beauty of which these flowers are the obscure symbol, the intimation of a 'dimension outside life' the idea of which haunted Proust. And this ideal dimension is referred to in terms of music; the flowers are first perfume, then rhythm, then melody, with the inscrutable beauty of melody. Next, framed within Marcel's hands they become a painting; and the lead into the passage on the pink hawthorns is a double comparison—that between the painter's sketch and the finished picture, that between a piece of music played on the piano and the same work played by an orchestra. The two comparisons are the more closely linked by the use of the word 'colour' to distinguish the richness of the orchestra from the clear tone of the piano.

The increased richness of the pink hawthorns as compared with the white is conveyed in terms of more frankly sensuous imagery. The associations Proust found in his mind during the explorations of Jean Santeuil are here lightly suggested, and their matter-of-factness is offset by a deprecatory irony. The pink biscuits are mentioned, and the bathos is cushioned by an indulgently slighting reference to the aesthetic values of Combray. The mature Proust is again double-sighted; aware of the emotional importance of the pink colour, aware also of the bathetic nature of its associations and that to sophisticated colour-sensibilities pink is a little crude and common. He manages, subtly, to admit the validity of the memories of pink biscuits and cream cheese with strawberries crushed in it while

adopting a patronizing attitude to such naïve and materialistic associations; and this attitude, at once admiring and condescending, is extended to nature itself, 'nature which, spontaneously, had expressed (the festive intention) with the naïveté of a village shop-keeper working at a wayside altar, over-loading the bush with rosettes of too lush a pink, this provincial "pomadour"'. And, from the idea of something exciting to eat in the eyes of a child, we pass to the idea of girls dressed for a ball. Just as, earlier, the transition was from the perfume of the hawthorns to the taste of Mlle Vin-teuil's cheeks, here the transition is from the flowers as girls dressed in pink to Gilberte, with her reddish hair and her pink-freckled face. Just as at the beginning of the passage on the Méséglise way Marcel longed to embrace the lilacs, here he fixes on Gilberte a look in which all his senses urge the capture of her, body and soul.

All these impressions which have been linked together are now concentrated into the image of Gilberte; her name becomes a magic talisman: everything that is mysterious in the impressions themselves is now placed within the mystery of Gilberte's unknown personality; every kind of desire, from the immediately sensual to the aspiration after the obscurely transcendent is concentrated into the desire for Gilberte: and her name is left floating on the air, ready to be picked up, literally in mid-air, when the story of Marcel's acquaintance with Gilberte is resumed in the second volume, thus connecting the two parts of the love-story with one of those links unconsciously operative before they are consciously perceived in the use of which Proust is a conscious master.

And the last stage in the development of the hawthorn theme is an half-suggestive, half-ironic reference to *Phèdre*: Marcel, on the eve of his departure for Paris, is found by his mother embracing the hawthorns as he would have liked to embrace the lilacs, trampling his new hat and tearing his new coat as *Phèdre* tore off her *vains ornements*. The *Phèdre* suggestions move forward into the rest of the novel with the story of Marcel's passion for Gilberte and Albertine; the theme is wound up in *Albertine disparue* with an overt and detailed analogy between *Phèdre* and Marcel in which Proust interprets Racine's psychology in his own terms.

Thus both the 'ways' bring together impressions in which delight in the senses is both an immediate pleasure and the suggestion of a more mysterious pleasure to be attained, a transcendent pleasure with which the only communication is through the imagination. In both cases Marcel places this transcendent pleasure in a person, and the attainment of the pleasure in the future. In the case of the *côté de Guermantes*, the contribution of the imagination is greater, that

PROUST AND COMBRAY

of the senses less than in the case of the *côté de chez Swann*. To each of these poetic aspirations corresponds a lower reality; Marcel's longing for the Guermantes magic is paralleled by Legrandin's snobbery; his romantic love for Gilberte is paralleled by his own more grossly sensual response to the beauty of the countryside, by the lesbianism of Mlle Vinteuil and her friend, by the forward look to the time when women will be the 'interchangeable instruments of a pleasure always the same'. Like Musset, Proust was inclined to look at sexual passion with the eye of a Chamfort as well as the eye of a Rousseau.



Judith Lewis: The Cross Keys, Chelsea

Correspondence



Sir,

I am sorry that my sanitary engineer has caused the generation of more heat than light in your pages. However, I can't help feeling that Mr Spender is chiefly to blame for turning my, need I say playful, analogy into an 'equation'. May I say that I chose sanitary engineering as the most down-to-earth job I could think of off-hand, and what I meant was that if you want a job done you usually, but not always, got better service from the professional? Analogies are, I have now learnt, dangerous weapons in controversy; it is risky to assume in all one's readers enough nous to perceive the limits beyond which they cease to be applicable. Still, I feel sure that not many readers of my original letter accompanied Mr Spender in his energetic pursuit of this particular red herring.

University College of Swansea

S. W. Dawson

Sir,

I opened the pages of Richard Ellman's *The Identity of Yeats* with the excitement which any unpublished material of the poet is bound to arouse. I was not disappointed. The poems quoted here which have not appeared in Yeats's collections, and the early workings of well-known poems, are, as Professor Day Lewis says in his review, of extraordinary interest. Mr Ellman is also able to provide the circumstantial evidence of many works. He tells us what Yeats was doing before and after the poems were written, he gives the dates of composition of most of the poems, and supplies many references of biographical interest in the notes.

Nevertheless Mr Ellman's analysis, which is so fascinating when it relates to the poet's life, fails when he comes to the poetry. It fails because it is not balanced by a feeling for what cannot be analysed, which is in lyric poetry the element that gives permanence and unity. In biography he may be trusted, but when he brings his judge-

CORRESPONDENCE

ment to individual poems he betrays a triteness of observation which it would be difficult to rival. In his analysis of diction in the chapter on Style there are as many laughs as in an early Chaplin, but it is all handed out in dead seriousness. It is bad enough not to know what is an inversion and what is not, but in this book even short words like 'that' and 'but' acquire a foreign status. In a note on *The Wild Swans at Coole* we are told that in its earlier form Yeats had written the last verse before the fourth which precedes it, and that in rewriting he changed the order of the verses but forgot to alter the word 'But' at the beginning of the last verse. Here are the verses:

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold,
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes where I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

It would be very interesting to know what word Mr Ellman, or anyone in the world for that matter, would prefer to 'But' in that particular context.

In comparing two versions of an earlier poem of Yeats Mr Ellman says that the later version demands less indulgence from the reader than the earlier. This book, valuable though it is for what it has brought to light, demands more indulgence than any reader with an ear for poetry can afford to give. The accident which makes a poem permanent, 'the luck' as Yeats called it, is something of which Mr Ellman takes little account. One is reminded in closing the book how much more a work of art, which is continually creating its own silence, can tell us than the voice of the guide.

Pennard Cliffs, Swansea

Vernon Watkins

Sir,

The London Magazine of July contained an appreciative review by Michael Swan of Amos Tutuola's book *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, which we publish. Mr Swan's review provoked a subtle letter from Mr G. D. Holiday, of Enugu, which you printed in the

September number. Since Mr Holiday appeared to question the value of Amos Tutuola's writing—and even the authenticity of his handwriting, of which we reproduced a page in his first book, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*—we wrote for precise information to the Rev Geoffrey Parrinder at University College, Ibadan.

Dr Parrinder happened to be on leave in England when we wrote, and his reply from Ibadan has only just reached us. He says:

'1. The suggestion that Tutuola's handwriting does not bear comparison with the "page from the author's manuscript" is false. Tutuola writes all his own manuscripts, in the large handwriting you reproduced, and I have seen hundreds of pages of it. Tutuola is literate, after six years at school. But I went out of my way in my introduction to stress that he is precisely not the equivalent of a university graduate.

'2. This leads on to the next point. Tutuola's genius is remarkable just because it is not cramped by an alien culture, but seeks to make a new synthesis as few others have attempted.

'3. Ben Enwonwu, referred to by Mr Holiday, has today told me that he greatly admires Tutuola's work.

'4. It is not just Europeans outside West Africa who are impressed by Tutuola. Many of us here feel that this is the sort of creative genius we have long expected.

'5. That many Nigerians find Tutuola's success incomprehensible is not remarkable. They have been taught to work for impeccable English and are somewhat dismayed at the success of a writer in a type of pidgin English.

'6. It is, of course, notorious that the same folk tales are common in many parts of West Africa. Nevertheless one would have expected them to emerge in new forms from those who in the past were among the most advanced culturally in West Africa, namely the Yoruba.'

London, WC1

Alan Pringle
for Faber and Faber Ltd

Book Reviews



AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY by Edwin Muir. (*The Hogarth Press*. 18s.)

Edwin Muir's autobiography is a good book written by a good man. The book's, and his, goodness is both simple and complex. The simplicity is in the integrity of the author's personality and in the clarity, a kind of visual clarity, with which he sees and feels and interprets. Yet there is a great complexity too—not the complexity of close analysis so much as the complexity of doubt, of modesty, of the consciousness that the world, however closely seen in some aspects, must remain half realized. So the past, often seen in a bright light, is still, as it was, mysterious and alive. What could be more truly and engagingly written than such a small piece of childish memory as this: 'I think I had just recovered from some illness, and everything looked clean and new. The General was walking through the field below our house in his little brown jacket with the brown leather tabs on the shoulders, his neat little knickerbockers and elegant little brown boots; a feather curled on his hat, and his little pointed beard seemed to curl too. Now and then he raised his silver gun, the white smoke curled upward, birds fell, suddenly heavy after seeming so light; our cattle, who were grazing in the field, rushed away in alarm at the noise, then stopped and looked round in wonder at the strange little man. It was a mere picture; I did not feel angry with the General or sorry for the birds; I was entranced with the bright gun, the white smoke, and particularly with the soft brown tabs of leather on the shoulders of his jacket.'

I have quoted this passage at length because it seems to me a good example, out of many, of how 'a mere picture', a picture which in some ways is not 'true' (for the General was not really 'strange', and the feeling of the cows was not precisely 'wonder'), can still possess a most vivid poetic truth, both for the inner and the outer eye. It is true to the life in a way in which more prosaic pictures cannot be true. It is by means of such meticulously honest, yet poetically inspired and meditated, pictures that the author most

wonderfully recreates that childhood world of calm and of excitement, and also succeeds, by simple touches and slight anecdotes, in presenting himself to the reader as an observer who delights both by his observations and by himself.

It must be easy and convenient for an autobiographer to create himself as a character in a novel is created, and for some kinds of autobiography this may be a desirable method. But in fact the reality or unreality of the self to the self is different from any presentation of a 'character'; and this is a fact which Edwin Muir knows well. 'I am writing about myself in this book, yet I do not know what I am.' True that he knows names, dates and places. He knows something of the history of the past on which we live, something of the structure of the society which acts upon us and in which we act. 'But,' he writes, 'I know all this in an external and deceptive way, as if it were a dry legend which I had made up in collusion with mankind.' With his keen eye for all kinds of variety, his sense of 'time's collaboration', his consciousness of the various factors which can distort the lives of rich and poor alike, he is, or has been, appalled by the difficulties of knowledge both of the self and of other selves. Sometimes he appears to be struggling to re-discover, in his maturity, the simplicity and natural meaning of the ordered society of his childhood in Orkney; and the task is the more difficult because, in his maturity, he knows the shades of the prison house and, this being so, that visionary gleam of childhood cannot, in fact, ever be recaptured. His conclusion, reached gradually and rather borne in upon him than discovered by any coherent system of rational thought, is that 'Human beings are understandable only as immortal spirits; they become natural then, as natural as young horses; they are absolutely unnatural if we try to think of them as a mere part of the natural world.' That the author should have chosen a young horse as a symbol for what is natural seems, in the way he meant it to be, appropriate. For his thoughts go backwards or forwards to a time or a timelessness of innocence, scenes where the lion can lie down with the lamb and neither tree nor ox need fear the destructive weapons of man, nor need man, for his subsistence, employ them.

It may be necessary in our times to point out that in this way of thought, as it is followed by Edwin Muir, there is nothing in the least that savours of the vegetarian or the sentimentalist. It is, with a difference, the way of thought of Blake and of Wordsworth. As for the experience itself, so far as that can be set down in dates and places and recordable events, it is not unique, except in the sense that it happened to one person, but it is various and in the way in

which it is recorded, most significant. The Orkney childhood was followed by years of appalling squalor and bitter loss 'in Glasgow as a Displaced Person, until at last I acquired a liking for that plain, warm-hearted city'. In his boyhood there was 'an equivocal religious conversion', and later he 'repeated the experience in another form' and became a socialist. He was in his late twenties profoundly influenced by Nietzsche. In his early thirties he had the good fortune to meet his wife and, he writes, 'have had since the greater good fortune of sharing my life with her'. There were periods of literary activity in London and later in Prague and Dresden before the war. Not till he was thirty-five did he begin to write poetry. There were more travels, experiments in 'advanced' education and 'advanced' thought. There was the war and the Home Guard ('We were without arms, but we observed good discipline'), illnesses and difficulties. After the war there were cultural posts at Prague and at Rome. And at the present time the author is the Warden of Newbattle Abbey College in Scotland.

It has been a full and varied life; but that, in itself, is not the point of the autobiography. The point is in the steady wisdom, the extreme sensitivity and the poetic illuminations of the narrator. These qualities were evident in the earlier autobiography, published some years ago, which forms the first part of this present volume. It is natural that the second part, which carries on the author's story from youth into middle age, should be more reflective and, in a way, more certain of itself. But the interval of thirteen years between the writing of the first and second parts has had no disrupting effect upon the whole. It is the same man with the same range of voices throughout. Yet the interval, a period of wars and revolutions which has discredited many ideas and given, perhaps, a renewed strength to some others, came, so far as this autobiography is concerned, at a fortunate moment. There was time, as there was need, for reflection. 'The cult of untrammelled freedom', for instance, could now be seen in perspective, and it could be observed that there was a relation between it and the subsequent dictatorships. It was possible, by standing back a little, to note a discontinuity which, for some reason, we are reluctant, when we are in the middle of the flow, to recognize. 'The generation to which I belong has survived an age, and the part of our life which is still immobilized there is like a sentence broken off before it could be completed; the future in which it would have written its last word was snatched away and a raw new present abruptly substituted; and that present is reluctant now to formulate its own sentence, from the fear that what it has to say will in turn be cut short by yet another raw present.' So much for that part of

BOOK REVIEWS

our life (and it is a large part) which can be, in this way, 'immobilized'. But Edwin Muir's sentences, with their qualities of vision, of resignation and of wonder, are not incomplete, even though the whole truth must remain, as always, to be told. The author is acutely conscious of the 'raw present' and, though experience will sometimes sort itself out for him in dreams or be seen, as Shelley saw the bees in the ivy-bloom, with a poet's eye, an illusion will always be recognized as an illusion. He has 'passed through stretches of blankness and deprivation' and from these he owns that he has learned things that he would not otherwise have known. With characteristic honesty he adds (of these periods) 'Yet I believe that I would have been the better without them', and as for the 'development' looked for in a life, he is 'very doubtful of such things'. Be that as it may, his autobiography seems to me to be of quite outstanding value, gentle and wise, modest, vivid and illuminating.

REX WARNER

WEDDING PREPARATIONS by Franz Kafka. Translated by Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins. (*Secker and Warburg*. 18s.)

The centrepiece of this new volume is Kafka's long letter (60 pages) to his father, written in 1919 but never delivered. The more important parts of this letter appeared several years ago in Max Brod's biography, but this is the first English publication in full. The title story — *Wedding Preparations in the Country* — consists of the brief beginnings, in two versions, of a novel which Brod (who contributes useful notes) dates at 1907-1908 and so among Kafka's earliest works. The rest of the book, the greater part of it, is made up of jottings, aphorisms, dreams, sketches for stories, fragments from notebooks and loose pages, mainly from 1917 on. Some of these short pieces, published here for the first time, are as exciting as anything in the already familiar works.

The title is apposite, for Kafka spent his life preparing for life. 'Still unborn', he notes — not here but in his diary for 1922 — 'and already compelled to walk around the streets and speak to people.' He dissects himself, not to isolate the parts but to unite them in harmony. His torment comes from the realization that he is only isolating the parts. All his writings are fragments of himself, fantastically projected by a born storyteller. They record hesitant journeys to . . . the sentence breaks off ('Whatever I touch crumbles to pieces'). We are at the frontier; the fragment is abandoned and Kafka recoils to push out again and again on unfinished journeys. In the title story

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of this volume, so early and already so characteristic, Eduard Raban sets out from the city for a fortnight's holiday in the country, where he is to join his fiancée. Committed to marriage, he finds the simple journey a bewilderment of obstacles. 'Evil is whatever distracts', says Kafka elsewhere in the book. The great distraction is, of course, marriage. But Raban's secret reluctance becomes, in true Kafka fashion, a series of external and apparently unrelated hindrances: rain, carriages that sweep across his path, a friend who accosts him in the street and talks and talks. He will miss the train. But no, it is still there when he reaches the station after a last wild rush through badly lighted passages. 'And high time too', says the booking clerk as he slams down the change. Just as in *The Trial* and *The Castle*, so here the unexpected is expected; we glimpse the gods who alone know the inevitability of what seems accidental to man's limited perceptions.

After a train journey in the company of peasants and commercial travellers Raban continues his travels as lone passenger in a horse-drawn omnibus meandering through the night. He is disheartened by the infinite possibilities that seem to surge from his actions. He plagues himself with interminable speculations: the difficult road, puddles under the wheels, mud on the spokes, the dripping horse—'Could not all this be used as reproaches against Raban? . . . This happened solely because Raban was travelling to his fiancée, to Betty, an oldish pretty girl.' Kafka's mind works like a crochet-hook that loops incessantly to and fro, hitching out in clause after clause the fearful complexity of this world's distracting possibilities. He is obsessed with what he describes in another part of this book as 'the manifold things that revolve, in manifold ways, in the manifoldness of the one moment in which we live'. This story takes its place worthily among the published works as an example of his individual method of creation: the innocently precise details that entice us into the disordered reality of dream, where we share the sunlit panic of a hero cramped by the open wall of his cell.

The jottings from notebooks are also of great interest. Apart from the nobility of individual entries, they confirm our view of Kafka as a man who senses innocence just round the corner ('The answer prowls round the question.') but knows, and is tormented by the knowledge, that his efforts to find innocence frustrate the intention, since effort is a sign of that consciousness which is the obstacle to harmony: 'I have a heavy hammer, but I cannot use it, for the handle is red-hot'. His world reverberates. Everything has repercussions and the repercussions affect everything. When he tries to climb he finds himself sinking: 'Man is an immense swamp'. Striving to build



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L O N G M A N S



BOOK REVIEWS

a glorious tower he realizes he is 'digging the pit of Babel'. The castle on the hill remains a distant dream, the dissecting knife has reached his heart, and his sense of guilt is so great that he knows the shame of it must outlive him.

The story of Eduard Raban is a premonitory vision of Kafka's own struggle, five or six years later, to escape marriage. His tuberculosis was the last defence against distraction, a lesser evil than the disease which he found curled up under every intention. Coughing blood: 'Let me say that I myself have torn myself to shreds. . . . The world — F. is its representative — and my ego are tearing my body apart in a conflict that there is no resolving.' In this extremity he recalls his father's favourite threat: 'I'll tear you apart like a fish!' This phrase, empty of intention, is strikingly evocative of the relationship between father and son. 'My writing was all about you', says Kafka to this terrifying father, this embodiment of authority. But unless one is fascinated by Kafka's fiction one may be bored by his truth. To readers of the novels this letter — essay, rather — must prove illuminating and moving; to others it may seem merely a petulant, if ingenious, exercise in exculpation. It is a valuable companion to Kafka studies. It uncovers the roots of his exaggerated fears, his sense of guilt, his personal uncertainty. But before we ascribe absolute importance to this relationship we should be quite certain that all the sons of domineering and insensitive fathers can write great fiction. Kafka is more than an inhibited child.

IDRIS PARRY

THE LOVE EATERS by Mary Lee Settle. (*Heinemann*. 10s. 6d.)

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In this as it were wholesome context, the word — thrown off to encourage, even to amuse his patient Marty Dodd — seems almost weightless. It is only perhaps at a second more careful reading that one realizes how sinister must be its impact on poor Marty: for it is a word she has heard before, on the lips of another type of confidential adviser, used to describe the young man, her stepson, with whom she has secretly and to her horror fallen in love. 'Incubus'

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now acquires a dual meaning, symbolic of her twofold plight.

This contrapuntal use of verbal dualism is one of the devices of Miss Settle's elaborate and skilful craftsmanship. *The Love Eaters* is a first novel; but its technical maturity, its command of form give the impression of a writer already authoritatively equipped; and I would venture a diffident guess that this author might be one of those privately dedicated seekers after words and meanings—(more often women)—whose gifts have come suddenly to coalesce and flower after years (perhaps) of trial and error, of exercises devotionally performed against odds of one kind or another. However that may be, she has now achieved a striking and ambitious piece of work, evoking a charged atmosphere, at once decadent and primitive, that haunts the memory with disquieting undertones and echoes. Her touch, which is deliberately, almost clinically precise, creates the kind of dry taut surface texture that one is apt to associate with a sophisticated social comedy; but in fact the moral territory she probes is inward, raw—an area of volcanic tensions and harrowing upheavals.

The theme is stated and developed on several concurrent or overlapping levels, starting with the arrival of two male persons, strangers to one another and also to the community, in the coal town of Canona in the Alleghanies. Both of these will act as catalysts, destructively. One is a theatrical director, a chair-bound cripple, engaged—one remains somewhat puzzled to know by whom and why and with what artistic results—by the local amateur Dramatic Society. The other stranger is Selby Dodd, son of Jim Dodd, prosperous, popular local coal magnate and Marty's husband. This young man is the hitherto unsuspected offspring of Jim's youthful 'marriage' to a faithless wanton—a disaster long ago buried in the past. His father's identity has been revealed to Selby by his alcoholic mother just before her suicide; after which he writes to Jim disclosing his paternity, and, darkly bright as Lucifer, descends upon Canona. For Jim and Marty, united fifteen years in 'a quiet rich polite childless marriage', in which intimate speech has become a last desperate resort, the event is the major emotional crisis of their married lives. Jim's reactions are direct, fervent and inarticulate: the boy is the child of his dreams made flesh, his security for the future, miraculous crowning proof of his virility. He welcomes his son triumphantly, without hesitation or embarrassment. For Marty the situation is more complicated: her sudden stepmotherhood, with which she copes admirably on the social as well as the domestic level, acts as a depth charge, shocking open submerged and impacted layers of her moral structure. She becomes a being split with secret

BOOK REVIEWS

fissures. For she also has a guilt-object buried in her past—namely, the child she was once pregnant with and destroyed by abortion. It is partly her own 'sin' of childlessness, now inexpiable, which causes her inability to bestow upon Selby a suitably maternal affection and so come to terms with the false mother-son relationship. Cold and corrupt, he plays her up, exploits her generosity and vulnerable warmth; but his personal responsibility for the unnatural feelings he arouses is shown as comparatively small. Cause and effect lie tangled deep underground, in betrayals of life—not only Marty's but also Jim's—that planted the seed of the monster who will overthrow her. In the end, however, her compassion for the spiritually diseased creature that has been engendered enables her to break out of her negative trance in an attempt to 'save' him—(and herself?)—by an act of pure protective tenderness. This act, in the event, becomes his death-sentence. He dies terribly, by fire. Jim, who cannot face reality, wraps his bereavement in a roseate shroud and comforts it with a falsely heroic, sentimental epitaph. Marty is condemned to live on with open eyes—a fate reminiscent of that allotted to the survivor in another American tragedy, *Ethan Frome*; and almost as intolerable.

This then is her novel's central tragic theme, to which a variety of subordinate themes and characters contribute. Apart from Marty's antique mother, a 'primitive' who seems to me unnecessarily repellent, the minor portraits, focused in a pitilessly searching lens, come vividly to life. One element, however, in the drama does leave an unresolved impression, a sense of contrivance, artifice, and that is the important character and rôle of Hamilton Sacks. A kind of Iago figure, the one fully conscious, wholly calculating villain of the piece, his part in the action is a dual one. A power-addict, frustrated, self-tormenting, masquerading as the detached omniscient observer, he pitilessly directs both play and players in a twofold sense. His passions, one is made to feel, are vicariously stimulated by detecting and exploiting those of others; but he too becomes emotionally involved with Selby: an underworld intrigue it seems, a thing of hints and whispers. It is here, I think, that a blurring of reality has occurred. The trouble is not so much that Selby remains from first to last a shadow, a mirror-figure only seen by his reflection—(this may well be deliberately intended?)—but that both he and Hamilton appear to belong to a different and much inferior type of novel—one of those fatigued novels about cosmopolitan perverts and neurotics whose taint seems literary nowadays as well as moral. One is inclined to picture their goings-on in Cannes rather than in Canona. It seems more than possible that Miss Settle is too

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adult and intelligent to lose her future way in any dangerous sense; but at the same time it is possible that she is not among those expatriate writers who can with impunity separate themselves from their native soil and memories.

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ROSAMOND LEHMANN

LORD OF THE FLIES by William Golding. (*Faber. 12s. 6d.*)

A BAR OF SHADOW by Laurens van der Post. (*Hogarth Press. 5s.*)

PICTURES FROM AN INSTITUTION by Randall Jarrell. (*Faber. 12s. 6d.*)

ASH ON A YOUNG MAN'S SLEEVE by Dannie Abse. (*Hutchinson. 9s. 6d.*)

A CROWN OF CONVULVULUS by Margaret Lane. (*Heinemann. 8s. 6d.*)

LOUISE by Viola Meynell. (*James Barrie. 10s. 6d.*)

This varied collection of novels and stories contains something to satisfy most educated tastes, and an astute lending-library assistant would know exactly how to distribute them among her subscribers. For those who like a book to make them think, there is Colonel van der Post; Mr Jarrell, a writer's writer, addresses himself to the professional intellectual. Mr Abse's public is less easy to define, but the title taken from *Little Gidding* and the long list of acknowledgements (to Boosey and Hawkes for permission to quote a line or two from 'Danny Boy', and so on) should help to classify this book as a fairly standard product. Miss Lane and Miss Meynell are for those who appreciate the more feminine qualities of subtlety and reserve; while anybody on the look-out for a promising first novel by a new writer will not be disappointed in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. This story is an intriguing cross between *The Admirable Crichton* and *A High Wind in Jamaica*, with a touch of *Coral Island*, deliberately distorted. A number of little boys are for some reason marooned on a desert island; at first all is fun, adventure, Boy Scout enterprise and happy communion with nature, but then, cut off as they are from civilizing influences, more sinister elements in their natures take control, and they soon become a party of savages, intent on hunting and killing and at war among themselves. Mr Golding succeeds in giving an impression of increasing nightmare, and some of the boys are very well characterized. In particular Piggy, a new and touching version of the classic fat boy of countless school stories, is a brilliant creation. It will be interesting to see what this talented author writes next.

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BOOK REVIEWS

A Bar of Shadow is a short story, published alone, and written in a style of conscious formality. Two men who had been together in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp meet some years later and discuss the figure of Hara, the Japanese sergeant who had been responsible for much of their suffering there. Hara was a revolting character, physically hideous and apparently half-crazy, who viciously beat the prisoners in his charge and sometimes cut off their heads—but only, we are told in extenuation, when the moon was full. For the curious aim of the writer is to enlist a certain kind of sentimental sympathy for Hara, or at least to endorse Hara's own view that his conviction by a War Crimes Tribunal, and subsequent execution, were grossly unjust. One of the speakers, Lawrence, who had suffered under Hara but none the less respected him and gave evidence in his favour at the Tribunal, discusses the Japanese character ('As a nation they romanticize death and self-destruction . . .') and points out that Hara's behaviour in wartime should not be judged by Western standards of right and wrong. Another prisoner, an Air Force officer called Hicksley-Ellis who (I think, understandably) emphasized at the trial Hara's extreme and indiscriminate brutality, has clearly less of the author's sympathy than Hara himself. One attempt is made to put the sergeant in a winning light: we are told that he often asked Lawrence questions about Father Christmas, in whom he took a quaint interest.

It seems to me that this book is an extreme example of misplaced sentimentality masquerading as spiritual profundity. Why should we be asked to feel pity for, or even a kindly interest in, this monster who delighted in motiveless torture and murder? Does Colonel van der Post *really* understand the Oriental myth, the 'hungry, bat-like gods' of Hara's race? There is a facile trick in literature which places the evil rather than the innocent in a romantic light, demanding understanding for the brutal and implying contempt for the mild, in order to give an illusion of deep thinking, originality and a disturbing challenge to accepted ideas. This story is patently sincere, but insufficiently persuasive; one prefers one's accepted ideas, especially as the new ones offered are couched in vague terms. The theme of the book is a fine one: it is difficult to love our enemies, but it can be done, and the effort must be made before peace on earth can be a possibility. (However, if believers of this gospel aren't careful they find themselves loving something dangerous and destructive for its own sake.) In this case, the author's literary skill fails to carry the moral to its conclusion; a genuine visionary sense is absent. Lawrence's noble attempt to 'see the other fellow's point of view' does not convince; for all his eloquence, one suspects that he has not

really seen it, but just feels nostalgic for those chats in the prison-camp about Father Christmas.

As far as I know, Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe* was the first satirical novel about a progressive college for women in America, and one might have expected it to be the last; now a poet, Randall Jarrell, has written 'a comedy' about a similar establishment. Both authors have taken their common subject extremely seriously as a worthy target for satire; to English readers their straw-splitting exposure of sillinesses in an apparently innocent and not very important institution runs the risk of seeming laboured. Earnest idealism, artiness and woolly liberalism can be funny, and Miss McCarthy showed why as well as how; Mr Jarrell relies on a humour purely verbal, a sort of erudite wise-cracking that soon grows tedious. He has not bothered to provide any plot, and the construction of his book is deliberately vague. He merely presents a set of characters (*Pictures from an Institution* is an accurate title) and discusses them at length, sometimes cattily and sometimes with pronounced sentimentality. His likes and dislikes among these people seem somewhat arbitrary; he is nasty about a lady novelist and the college's arriviste President, nice about a couple called the Rosenbaums (they mean Europe to him) and Constance, a young girl whose charm he fails to communicate to his readers. He is so violently prejudiced about his characters that it is tempting to answer back, to point out that the lady novelist is better company than Constance, the President in his way as worthy as the Rosenbaums. The fact that this book is so irritating is perhaps a compliment to the author, proving that in spite of all he has persuaded one to take it seriously too. With its mannered writing, its self-conscious satire of high-brow excesses from a super-highbrow position, and an impression it gives of trying to go one better than somebody else, it never rises above the level of clever parochial gossip; perhaps another member of the parish will now write a book about Mr Jarrell.

Ash on a Young Man's Sleeve is also a first novel by a poet; it is just what one would expect a poet's first novel to be, and whatever Mr Jarrell's book is it isn't that. Dannie Abse is more likeable as a writer, but less entertaining. He describes childhood and adolescence in South Wales: 'Through the November streets we roamed: Bob, Basil, Ken, Alun (who had just moved into the district) and myself, the youngest.' The good qualities are poetic ones: an occasional imaginative descriptive passage, now and again a sentence strikingly composed, a feeling for fantasy, an eye for eccentricity. Yet as a novel it is hackneyed and flat; the form is a tired one. A book of this kind, sensitive, subjective, nostalgic, probably (in spite of a dis-

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BOOK REVIEWS

claimer) autobiographical, invoking the atmosphere of adolescence and peopled by Welsh and Jewish types, must be very good indeed in order to avoid a stale flavour; there have been too many. Mr Abse writes well, but not well enough to reconcile his readers to the familiarity of his material and the way it is treated. Such a book, written with honesty, taste and skill, difficult to write and for all its worthiness difficult to read, lends some support to the assertion, periodically repeated in the press, that the novel is a dying form of art. It is, of course, less a symptom of a dying art, than a casualty of the ever-changing fashions within the art, which by refusing to remain static really prove its health.

Two collections of stories by women writers are so thoroughly satisfactory that there is little a reviewer can say of them, beyond strongly recommending them to everyone. The ten stories of Margaret Lane's *A Crown of Convolvulus* are uniformly successful; serious, enjoyable, they are flawlessly constructed and each point is made with exactly the right degree of emphasis. There is no straining for originality in these stories, and while their plots are all good ones it is the author's sure touch and literary taste that distinguish them. Much the same can be said of Viola Meynell's *Louise* and other stories, though these are slighter in theme and (in a sense that implies no criticism) more amateurish. Some are little more than sketches, studies in irony or sensibility, but at least two (*Death of a Dog* and *Silver Trumpets*) could not be better of their kind.

FRANCIS WYNDHAM

NEW POEMS: the PEN anthology for 1954. Edited by Rex Warner, Christopher Hassall and Laurie Lee. (*Michael Joseph*. 10s. 6d.)

POEMS by Diana Witherby. (*Derek Verschoyle*. 6s.)

The new PEN collection is a Spotted Dick containing some very queer ingredients. But then, to select out of ten thousand poems one each from a hundred authors, was a task that might be expected to dull the finest taste. The result makes one feel that it would have been better to keep to the method followed in previous years, printing several poems by each of a much smaller number of poets. The editors seem to have been influenced by a charitable wish to leave no one out who could possibly be brought in—perhaps they were haunted by the editor's special phantasm of the morning post, carrying all those rejected envelopes to their disappointed owners. Therefore they limited the poets to one poem each, actually asked for work from only twenty, and interpreted their purpose (laid down in

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the first issue as being to print a selection 'representative of the poetic impulse of our time') to mean anything which might be encountered in print between London and John O'London's. But the policy of one poem per poet, apart from the spotted effect, makes it very difficult to judge the merits of any individual. Mr Charles Causley, for instance, would seem to anyone who did not know his other work to be simply a writer of ballad pastiche, for the poem here printed gives no hint of the satirical salt that flavours his poetry. And as to the 'poetic impulse of our time' — at moments one seems to be back in the time of the Georgians, with the battle against 'poetic' diction still unfought. Here is 'laughter over the lea', and a 'bitter-sweet October'; and a 'loving wraith' called Thomas Hardy 'follows with seeing, unseeing eye

That familiar path to the churchyard gate [aye, too familiar]
Still quietly brooding upon his rhymes,
And on his lips an eternal Why?
As he thinks how man has been marred by fate
Times, ay times'.

There are good poems in this book, including some good light-serious work by Stevie Smith, Patric Dickinson and others; there are many more which were worth printing for some good quality. But when due credit has been allowed for these, it must still be said that there are too many bad poems, some downright comic, like the *Ode to Bamboo* (or did someone make this up as a joke?), and all written in a dead language, remote from contemporary speech. It is difficult to believe that the editors were really in that state of amicable and approving agreement about them, which is described in the preface. Perhaps the answer lies in their conception of the duty of an editor. According to them, he should be 'a man trained to follow all comers. He is passive and ready to be led.' This is a welcome attitude of humility when one compares it with the arrogance of the man-in-the-street who demands to be made to understand, or the coterie member who likes nothing that he *can* understand, and one can applaud their readiness to listen, and their apt phrase: 'It is enough to know for sure that the cage is occupied, even if one cannot identify, or even see, the beast.' But it is fatal for an editor to be too receptive: he may need to swim with his mouth open, but it must be fitted with a whalebone.

In one section, the plan of arranging the poems by subjects has been notably successful. There are five poems on mythological themes which provide interesting comparisons, and provoke thought about the nature of such poetry. None of them is without technical skill, yet Edwin Muir's *Telemachos Remembers* is the only one in

which there is a real intensity of feeling; the only one in which the subject seems to have moved the imagination, rather than the fancy, casting about for some classical or biblical topic for a composition. Mr Blackburn's *Samson* overbalances into bad taste, by its too-painstakingly voluptuous description—'To bathe his steaming meat in scented streams'. Mr Bottrall's *Adam Unparadised* is an ambitious piece that fails because of a failure of the poetic instinct—the sense that knows what can and cannot be done. Auden might have risked Adam's remark to God:

Those morsels of me that are you, the divine
Chromosomes,

but it would have taken all his cunning to set it in the right context, and he would not have followed it with an unmarked quotation from William Blake. Milton turns up later; Godiva rhymes with saliva; and Adam continues:

'Father, have you not over-reached
Yourself?'

which is an example of contemporary speech, certainly, but in the wrong place. How difficult is the problem of diction!

Mr Day Lewis's *Pegasus* is a very enjoyable poem, but its neighbourhood to Muir's helps one to see it as a piece of—highly skilful—poetic journalism. Most skilful: but even so my ear sometimes quarrels with his. In his youth he rhymed *bridge* with *rich*, I remember, and he still goes in for the nine-tenths rhyme, which sets the teeth on edge because the sounds are too close together. Such are *cause* and *horse* in this poem, and perhaps *glory* and *more he*, though there are other things to be said about this last.

Miss Diana Witherby, who is represented in this anthology by a rather enigmatic poem called *Discovery*, has just published her first collection. There are further enigmas in its pages, not because the thought is recondite, but because it has not always been completely translated into poetry, so that one is left with something that is not quite a poetic image, unexplainable except in its own terms, and not a clear-cut prose statement. Her naturalist in an archaeological setting, her lover in retreat from life, are unsatisfying figures because we have not been properly introduced to them. The indeterminacy is partly due to rhythmical weakness: the metre is often neither free nor formal, but hovers between the two—as in this attempt at the difficult triple rising rhythm:

And the lover reflects that if only his words,
His passion and pining would migrate with the birds
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S · P · C · K

BOOK REVIEWS

This silence would seem like a tiny blue stone
Instead of a cavern where he is alone.

The visual sense, on the other hand, is clear and strong, and the poems have the important virtue of sincerity: no emotion is forced, and one feels that the author has been constant in searching her motive. The impulse of pity, often present here, has nothing faked or fashionable about it, even when the subject is an *Institution Child*:

Where are the shells he could hold
Their rings singing space in his ears?
The voices that call him echo through doors,
Whisper near gratings and click fast like keys,
Words are in uniform, words shroud his heart—
And soon, soon, the wild
Lion, love, will run with a phantom instead of a child.

ANNE RIDLER

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *The Complete Works*. Edited by Charles Jasper Sisson. (Odhams. 25s.)

The Shakespearean editor is faced with a number of basic problems. Even in the seventeen plays which first appeared in the Folio in 1623, he will have to emend scores of passages, though emendations are seldom completely satisfying, and he will have to decide whether or not to adhere to the original punctuation, lineation, and spelling. If he modernizes the punctuation he may destroy a subtlety of meaning; if he does not he may be retaining something for which Shakespeare was not really responsible. If the editor joins two half-lines together he may eliminate a significant pause; but if he keeps to the Folio lineation he may be preserving a meaningless accident of the printing-house. Professor Sisson modernizes spelling, ignores the Folio lineation, but keeps closer to Elizabethan punctuation than most editors.

There are many other problems. Two compositors were responsible for the Folio text, one more accurate than the other; and theoretically we ought to be more ready to emend the pages of the latter compositor. There are, moreover, slight differences between one copy and another, and it has been argued that we ought to postpone the publication of new editions of Shakespeare until Hinman has finished his collation (with the help of an ingenious electric machine) of the 79 copies of the Folio in the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Where there is also a quarto text of a play, published in Shakespeare's lifetime, the problem becomes still more complicated. Some

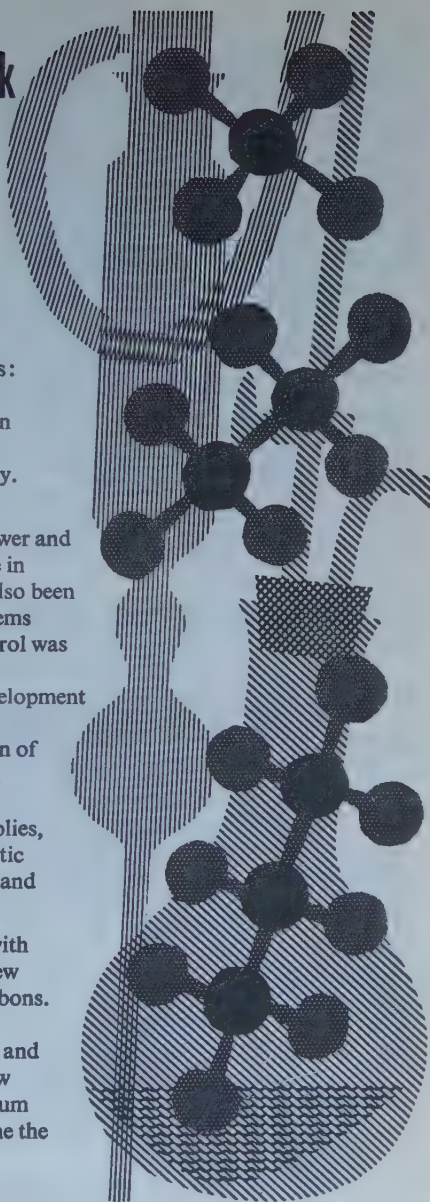
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quartos were probably printed from Shakespeare's own manuscript, others are manifestly corrupt, and some are betwixt and between. Even the worst may preserve a true reading, and even the best text contains many errors. Sometimes, as with the rival texts of *Troilus and Cressida* and *Othello*, on which the bibliographers are still quarrelling, the editor has to choose between numerous variants, and there is no certain criterion of choice. The editors of the Folio had already begun to 'improve' on Shakespeare; but we cannot be certain that some of the improvements were not Shakespeare's second thoughts. Was it Shakespeare who changed *acerbe* to *bitter* as an epithet for *coloquintida*, and changed *banning* to *foaming* and *enscarp'd* to *ensteep'd* in the next scene of *Othello* (II.i.11,70)? Was it Shakespeare who in the scene of the blinding of Gloucester changed *rash* to *stick* and *dearn* to *stern*? Was it Shakespeare who changed *co-mart* to *cov'nant* and *lauds* to *tunes* (*Hamlet* I.i.93; IV.vii.179)? In each of these cases Professor Sisson assumes that Shakespeare was responsible for the change, though such substitutions of ordinary words for unusual ones are likely to have been made by anyone but the author.

The general tendency in recent years has been to restore the original text in places where earlier editors resorted to emendation. As our knowledge of Elizabethan English has grown, words which seemed not to make sense have re-acquired a satisfactory meaning. Professor Sisson has restored the original readings in a large number of cases, though there was no need to emend *accust* to *accurs'd* (*Macbeth* IV.iii.107) or *cyme* to *senna* in the same play (V.iii.55). Some of his own emendations are, I think, unnecessary. Claudio thus describes Isabella's powers of silent persuasion:

for in her youth

There is a prone and speechlesse dialect,
Such as moue men.

Professor Sisson ingeniously emends *prone* to *grace* and thereby sacrifices a nice touch in Isabella's portrait—the eagerness of her youth was in itself appealing. Later in the play Isabella tells Angelo:

Were I vnder the tearmes of death,

Th'impression of keene whips, I'd weare as Rubies,
And strip my selfe to death, as to a bed,
That *longing haue* bin sicke for, ere I'd yeeld
My body vp to shame.

Professor Sisson emends *longing haue* to *long I have*. The meaning is more straightforward, but is it what Shakespeare intended? Isabella is thinking of stripping herself for death as for a lover; Professor Sisson makes her a sick person who welcomes death to put her out of

her misery. It is characteristic of Shakespearian style that one image should slide into the next. At the beginning of this quotation Death is a beadle whipping a harlot; Isabella thinks of stripping herself for punishment, but the image takes on a sexual meaning. It is important that we should preserve the sensuous element in Isabella's chastity.

On the other hand, Professor Sisson sometimes clings to Folio readings, rejecting standard emendations which greatly improve the sense. He retains a famous line in *The Tempest* (III.i.15), 'Most busie lest, when I doe it', which can only baffle the reader. He follows the Folio in ascribing 'tell me your minde, I am a messenger' (*T.N.* I.v.219) to Viola, though the first four words must surely be Olivia's. He does not accept Theobald's emendation of *on't* to *out* in Olivia's lines—

I haue said too much vnto a hart of stone,
And laid mine honour too vnchary on't.

Nor does he even accept the change of *mortality* to *morality* in Lucio's words to Claudio who has been moralizing on his imprisonment:

If I could speake so wisely vnder an arrest, I would send for
certaine of my Creditors: and yet, to say the truth, I had as
lief haue the foppery of freedome, as the mortality of im-
prisonment.

Professor Sisson has made full use of the methods of bibliographical and palaeographical analysis, and some of his best emendations have been made by considering how the corruption might have arisen. The emendation *planet-like* for *pertaunt-like* (*L.L.L.* V. ii. 67) or of *rogue* for *rage* (*M.V.* II. i.35) depend on knowledge of Elizabethan handwriting. In one or two passages Professor Sisson has cleared up the text by showing that the compositor has failed to observe Shakespeare's deletion marks, so that the first draft and the corrected version both appear in the text. I doubt, however, whether Shakespeare could ever have written, even in a first draft, the lines given in a footnote in the last scene of *Romeo and Juliet*:

And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again, come lie thou in my arm,
Here's to thy health, where'er thou tumblest in.
O true apothecary!
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

It is probable that these lines derive from the corrupt first quarto of the play, and that they were retained by mistake, for a corrected copy of this quarto was used by the compositors of the good quarto.

A large number of errors in the original editions arose from causes unknown. Every author knows that even in the days of typewriters

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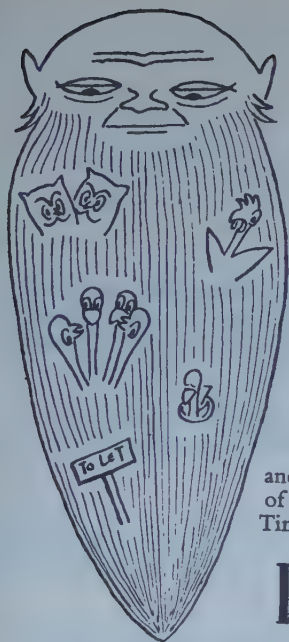
BOOK REVIEWS

errors creep in, and they are often inexplicable. Such errors can be emended, if at all, only by literary discrimination and an intimate knowledge of Elizabethan English. As Mrs W. M. T. Nowotny puts it in her essay on the text: 'It will be apparent by now that so ample is the scope for literary discrimination, despite the rigours of modern textual theory, that an edition of Shakespeare is, in the last analysis, an essay in taste'. Professor Sisson is, to judge from his previous books, a natural conservative; but he has nevertheless made some daring improvements in the text. It would not be fair to judge these until we have the companion volume in which he is going to defend his emendations.

No edition of Shakespeare is likely to satisfy everyone in every particular. It is possible to quarrel with Professor Sisson's text in a number of places, but it should be stressed that he has gone some way to justify the publisher's boast that he has restored sense and accuracy in many passages. The general reader may not realize the learning and labour which have helped to illuminate dark passages, but he will appreciate the clear type and good paper, and the various aids to understanding provided in this edition.

There are six useful essays (by Harold Jenkins, Hilda Hume, Bruce Pattison and others) which together form a valuable introduction to Shakespearian scholarship. Dr Jenkins has also supplied the text of *Sir Thomas More*, a feeble, rambling piece of work, with additions in which the hand of the master is apparent. Professor Sisson himself prefaces each play with a short note, mainly factual, and these notes display the editor's conservatism more clearly than his text. We are not allowed, for example, to suppose that there is any connection between Prospero's farewell and Shakespeare's own retirement. Some of Professor Sisson's views may be questioned. Perhaps Hall rather than Holinshed was the main source of *Henry V*; perhaps *Pericles* was based on a lost play — and few would agree that 'the play is all of a piece'; and the wager-plot of *Cymbeline* is based on *Frederyke of Jennen* as well as on the *Decameron*. Finally, it should be mentioned that the valuable glossary has some omissions, e.g. *courage* in the sense of *comrade*.

KENNETH MUIR



*There was an Old Man with a beard, who said
 "It is just as I feared!—
 Two Owls, and a Hen, four Larks and a Wren
 Have all made their nest in my beard!"*

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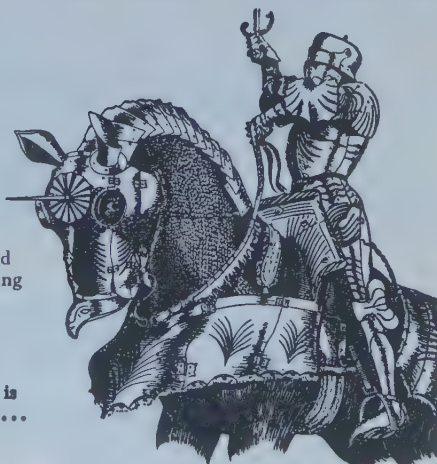
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VERNON SCANNELL is 32. At Leeds University he was captain of boxing and won the Northern Universities' Championships at three weights. He has published a book of verse, *Graves and Resurrections*, and two novels, *The Fight* and *The Wound and the Scar*.

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RICHARD EBERHART was born in Austin, Minnesota, and educated at Dartmouth College, at Cambridge, and at Harvard. Nearly all his books have had their first publication in England. The most recent are *Selected Poems* (1951) and *Undercliff* (1953).

J. C. HALL's first collection of poems, *The Summer Dance*, was published in 1951. A poem of his appeared in *The London Magazine* No. 3. He edited and introduced Edwin Muir's *Collected Poems*.

KENNETH MUIR is King Alfred Professor in the University of Liverpool. He has edited *Macbeth* and *King Lear* in the Arden Shakespeare, Wilkins's novel *Pericles* and an anthology of Elizabethan Lyrics. His book on Milton is about to appear.

Professor J. M. Cocking's *Proust and Combray* will form part of a longer study of Proust, to be published early in 1955 by Messrs Bowes and Bowes in their *Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought* series.

The correct price of Laurence Brander's *George Orwell* (Longmans, Green), reviewed in our November issue, is not 10s. 6d. but 12s. 6d., and it is not published in the Men and Books series.

